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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-052 *17 March 1995*

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Reportage on Economic Conference Organization Summit

Afghanistan's Rabbani Holds News Conference

BK1603162995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Afghan President Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani has said he supports UN efforts for peace in his country, but will not step down unless a reliable and comprehensive mechanism for transfer of power is available. He was addressing a news conference in Islamabad today. He said his government intends to work for the progress and prosperity of the Afghan people, but certain outside elements are bent on keeping disorder and disturbance in Afghanistan. The impression that a civil war going in Afghanistan is wrong. In fact, a war has been imposed on us through proxy. In reply to a question, he said military option was forced on his government by Taleban. His government tried to reach an understanding with Taleban but their approach was not flexible.

Professor Rabbani said as a member of ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], his country intends to play an effective role for the economic progress of the region, especially utilizing the geographic (?location) of Afghanistan.

He termed the reports as baseless and untrue that his government is receiving military help from Russia and India.

In reply to a question regarding seizure of Afghan goods in transit by Pakistan, he said a meeting between the officials of the two countries is scheduled on the 27th of this month. He is hopeful they will be able to find out an amicable solution to the problem.

'Synopsis' of ECO Accords Published

BK1603122795 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 15 Mar 95 p 2

["Text" of the "synopsis of the instruments signed at the third ECO summit" in Islamabad on March 14-15]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] i) Articles of agreement of the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] trade and development bank:

Under article V of the treaty of Izmir, an ECO trade and development bank is to be established with the objective of financing development projects and promoting intraregional trade. The articles of agreement of the proposed bank were finalised by the experts of the State Bank of Pakistan, the Central Bank of Iran and the Under-Secretariat for Treasury and Foreign Trade of Turkey.

Under the articles of agreement, the unit of account of the bank is deemed to be ECO unit (EU). Each EU is equivalent to one special drawing right (SDR) of the IMF. The authorised capital of the bank is EU 1000 million divided into 10,000 shares each having a par value of EU 100,000. EU 300 million out of the authorised capital would be paid by the founding members i.e. Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. The equivalent of EU 90 million shall be initially paid by the founding members in equal amount within 90 days from the date of the coming into force of the articles of agreement (establishment date). Equivalent of EU 210 million should be paid in equal consecutive annual instalments starting within a year of the establishment of the bank.

The articles of agreement have been signed by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey.

ii) Agreement and Articles of Association of Shipping Company:

Under article X of the Treaty of Izmir, an ECO shipping company is to be established to ensure adequate shipping services among member countries. Under the decision of the ECO council of ministers, the headquarters of the shipping company would be located in Iran.

Under the provisions of the agreement and articles of association, the scope of work of the shipping company would cover carriage of all kinds of cargo, containers, bulk cargo as well as services related to brokerage, construction, insurance etc in the shipping field. The nominal capital of the company would be US dollars 10 million, divided into 10,000 shares of US dollars 1,000 each. Each member country and/or nominees will hold 1000 shares. The parties to the agreement shall subscribe their initial shares in equal proportion. All groups of shareholders shall enjoy equal rights in all respects. Flag on ships of participating countries, invested as capital in kind, will keep their own flag and will remain registered in the shipping register of their own countries. Ship acquired by the company otherwise, will be registered in a port to be prescribed by the board of directors. The agreement also contains necessary provisions for the participation of the private sector in the shipping company.

The agreement and articles of association have been signed by Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

iii) Agreement and Articles of Association of ECO Air.

The establishment of a joint ECO airline was proposed by Iran in 1992. The council of ministers at its special meeting in Istanbul in July 1993 decided that the proposed airlines would be headquartered in Iran.

Under the agreement and the articles of the association of ECO Air, the company shall operate scheduled and non-scheduled air services with traffic rights in the member countries with the approval of concerned aeronautical authorities. It would also operate flights outside the member countries with prior specific permission of the aeronautical authorities of all ECO air member states. The company's capital shall be US dollars 30 million, divided in shares of US dollars 100 each. The paid-up capital is 60 per cent of the total capital of the

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company. The capital shall be subscribed in cash and in equal proportions by ECO member countries.

The agreement and articles of association have been signed by Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

iv) Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] on ECO reinsurance:

Under article VI of the treaty of Izmir, the integrated ECO reinsurance pool is to be converted into an ECO reinsurance company. At its special meeting in Istanbul in July 1993, the Council of Ministers decided that the ECO reinsurance company shall be located in Pakistan.

Under the MoU signed, the existing reinsurance pool—presently functioning in Istanbul—will be transferred to Karachi on 1 January 1996. The provisions of the MoU provide for the conversion of the pool into reinsurance company as well as its establishment in Karachi. The company shall be established by equity participation of the three founding members—Pakistan, Iran and Turkey—through the ECO bank. The capital of the ECO Re [word as published] would be US dollars 30 million.

The MoU has been signed by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey.

v) ECO Transit Trade Agreement:

The purpose of the transit trade agreement is to facilitate trade between two member states when the goods transported have to pass enroute through other member state(s). Under the agreement, the transported goods shall not be subject to the payment or deposit of import or export duties and taxes while in transit through the territory of any member state. The agreement also contains necessary safeguard clauses. For instance, it would not preclude the application of restrictions imposed under national regulations on grounds of religion, public morality, hygiene, or public health or environmental considerations.

The agreement has been signed by Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

vi) Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of ECO Countries:

Under the agreement on simplification of visa procedures, all diplomatic and consular missions of ECO member countries will issue visas to businessmen of the other member countries upon presentation of an introductory letter from the relevant competent national authority in commercial affairs. Visas, or residence permits, would be given to businessmen engaged in exports, imports or investment activities between the contracting parties. Visas, or an appropriate reply, would be given within 72 hours of applying. There would be a provision for multiple entry visas for a maximum period of one year with a maximum stay of 30 days. The visa holders will be prohibited from undertaking any activities inconsistent with their status in the host country.

The agreement has been signed by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

vii) Charter of the ECO Cultural Institute:

Under the provisions of the treaty of Izmir, the member states are required to take all necessary measures to promote cultural cooperation amongst them. Accordingly, Iran proposed the revival of the cultural institute of the RCD [Regional Cooperation and Development] days, which was located in Tehran and had branches in Pakistan and Turkey.

Under the Charter, the headquarters of the cultural institute will be in Tehran and with branches in each member state. The institute will, inter alia, work to foster closer association and cooperation among the people of the region in general and among the mass media, intellectuals and artists in particular. It will promote exchanges in the fields of culture, education and information. Besides publishing a quarterly journal on English, the institute will also arrange to publish the works of eminent writers, painters, photographers etc. of the member countries.

The charter has been initialed by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

viii) Charter of the ECO Science Foundation:

Under article XIV of the treaty of Izmir; An ECO Science foundation is to be established, headquartered in Islamabad with a view to building up a reservoir of highly skilled scientific and technical manpower and strengthening the scientific and research institutions in the member states.

Under the charter now signed, the headquarters of the foundation would be in Islamabad with coordinating centers in each member country. The foundation would, inter alia, strengthen scientific cooperation among member states through institutional links, exchange of scientists, and holding of collaborative seminars and conferences on major S and T [science and technology] issues. Besides issuing a quarterly scientific bulletin, the foundation would also arrange the holding of science and technology fairs and exhibitions.

The Charter has been initialed by all member countries.

ix) MoU with UNDP [United Nations Development Program]:

The Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and UNDP envisages mutual cooperation to support ECO member countries efforts in promoting sustainable human development, environmentally-sound use of natural and mineral resources, and raising living standards of the people of the region. The mechanisms to be used for the purpose would include exchange of information, periodic consultations and publication of studies in the fields of common interest.

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The MoU has been signed by the Secretary General, ECO and the Associate Administrator, UNDP.

x) MoU with UNDCP [expansion unknown]:

The Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and UNDCP envisages mutual coordination in drug control activities. Besides mutual consultations and exchange of information on matters of common interest, ECO and UNDCP will benefit from each other's technical assistance in areas such as human resources development, drugs intelligence, legislation, financial investigation, money laundering, precursor control, and the establishment of a networking arrangement among existing institutions in drug abuse prevention.

The MoU has been signed by the Secretary General, ECO and personal representative of UN Secretary General, on behalf of UNDCP.

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Arafat Promises Covenant Amendment After Elections

TA1603152395 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Mar 95 pp A1, A10

[Report by Aluf Ben and Gay Bekhor]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has suggested that the Palestinian council to be elected in the territories will revoke the clauses in the Palestinian National Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel "immediately after the elections." According to Israeli sources, 'Arafat told Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres in their meeting last week that an amendment to the covenant would be one of the points in his election platform.

Peres reported the contents of the conversation to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher when they met the same day.

Christopher asked Peres whether progress was made on amending the covenant, and Peres replied that the matter would be included in an interim framework.

On June 1, the U.S. Administration must report to Congress on the PLO's behavior, including its fidelity to the commitment to amend the covenant. Israel's agreement to include the issue in the interim arrangement will result in the postponement of the discussions to amend the covenant at least until 1 July, the target date for completing the arrangement. It is also unclear how the elected council in the territories will be able to revoke the covenant since it has been ratified by the PLO's institutions.

Another round of talks on elections in the territories, which lasted two days, ended in Cairo yesterday. The talks focused on the structure of the Palestinian council to be elected and progress was made. Next week, the heads of delegation—Yo'el Singer and Sa'ib 'Urayqat—will meet in Jericho to continue the talks.

A series of agreements have been reached in the talks so far:

—The entire council will operate as a legislative body, while some of its members will be appointed to an executive authority and will hold the PA's executive posts. In yesterday's talks, the structure of the council was defined as "a body within a body," "like a Russian babushka doll." The number of members in each body is still undecided.

— The members of the council will be elected in regional elections. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be divided into regions—the number has not yet been decided. In each region, several members will be elected through a proportional system so that candidates with the largest number of votes are elected. Under such a system, opposition candidates or minority groups will also have a chance of being elected to the council. Israel suggested that any movement committed to using democratic rather than violent means will be able to participate in the elections.

—The council chairman ('Arafat) will be elected separately and the council will not be able to depose him. The chairman will also be supreme commander of the Palestinian police force. He will appoint the members of the executive authority, with the approval of the entire council.

—The elections will be held within 60 days of the signing of the overall interim settlement.

—Israel received the EU's agreement to coordinate the activities of the international observers to the elections. The Palestinians still suggest that the observers operate on behalf of the United Nations, but they will apparently agree to European participation. [passage omitted]

Savir on Progress Made at Cairo Talks on Elections

TA1603182195 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Studio interview with Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir by Shlomo Ganor on 16 March—recorded, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; processed from the Hebrew]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ganor] Mr. Savir, how close are Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] to completing the negotiations on the elections?

[Savir] Progress was made on issues related to the council as well as other issues, and there still are some matters in dispute. We must remember that these are Palestinian elections. Many of the issues that do not concern us will be determined by the Palestinians alone. The elections will be linked, in the negotiations, with redeployment, empowerment, and Israel's security interests. This will take a few more months.

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[Ganor] Will the self-government council have legislative powers, for example?

[Savir] Yes. According to the Declaration of Principles, it will also have legislative powers; the nature of these powers is currently on the negotiating agenda.

[Ganor] Will the elections be open to every Palestinian body wishing to take part?

[Savir] I believe that both parties share an interest in seeing in the elections the building of the PA's democratization. It is also a Palestinian interest that racist or violent bodies not take part. Certainly, this is our position.

[Ganor] Did you mean to say that one of the issues still in dispute is the question of the right of the residents of East Jerusalem to elect and be elected?

[Savir] Yes. This issue is still under negotiation.

[Ganor] What is the direction of the solution?

[Savir] Let us leave something for the negotiators.

[Ganor] Will the parties meet the deadline of 1 July?

[Savir] I very much hope so. I believe both parties are serious in learning the lessons from Gaza and Jericho and improving the security situation. There must be security in Gaza, in the West Bank and, certainly, in the State of Israel. This is a common interest. We are also working on economic issues in order to see the fruits of the agreement. The negotiations are very complex. Today, the two parties have a better understanding of the common interests, the necessary cooperation, and the desired agreement which, I hope, will be implemented by the set date.

[Ganor] What is the earliest date elections could be held in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip?

[Savir] This will have to be determined by the parties in the agreement.

[Ganor] Will they take place in 1995?

[Savir] I am certain they will. Israel has no reason to postpone the elections once an agreement is made. We will have to prepare for the redeployment and empowerment, and we share an interest with the Palestinians in viewing the elections as the heart of the agreement between us.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Jerusalem Seminar Says City 'Key' to War, Peace

NC1403140695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1120 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Mar (MENA)—The final statement issued by the international seminar on Jerusalem, which was held at the Arab League Secretariat, has affirmed that holy Jerusalem is the key to war and peace in the Middle East since it is at the core of the question of Palestine, which itself is the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The statement stressed that just and comprehensive peace will not be achieved without the return of Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty, since it is an indivisible part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967.

The participants in the seminar condemned the Israeli measures of seizing Arab land and property, continuing to build and expand settlements in holy Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Arab Palestinian territories, keeping the siege going, and isolating the rest of the occupied Arab territories.

The final statement of the international seminar on Jerusalem asked the United Nations and the international community to try to force Israel to stop Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and to implement the UN resolutions issued on this matter regarding stopping settlement-building and dismantling the existing settlements, since they violate international law and threaten the peace process.

In their final statement, the participants in the seminar called on the international community to adhere to Security Council Resolution 478 of 1980, which stipulates that diplomatic missions of various countries to Israel should not be transferred to Jerusalem.

The participants affirmed that all measures and arrangements designed to change the legal status of Jerusalem are null and void. They said that these measures are contrary to the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The participants condemned in their final statement all Israeli digging and exploration activities designed to distort the character of Jerusalem and remove Islamic monuments, particularly around the holy mosque, which could threaten the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock with collapse.

They called on the peace-loving forces of the world and the international and regional agencies to start a campaign to repair the historic, cultural, and religious sites in Jerusalem to preserve and protect them from the danger of extinction, secure the necessary housing for the Palestinians in the city, and bolster their steadfastness and resistance of the geographic and demographic changes and judaization the city is being subjected to.

The final statement of the Jerusalem seminar called for starting a media campaign on the international level to counter the Israeli claims over Jerusalem and support the stances of the Palestinian negotiators in the talks over Jerusalem, as well as to publicize the just Palestinian rights to Jerusalem and the need to restore Palestinian sovereignty to the city as the capital of the state of Palestine.

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The statement affirmed the importance of convening this seminar to prepare for other international seminars to keep the issue of Jerusalem at the focus of international attention so that it returns to its rightful owners.

He also affirmed the importance of the status of Jerusalem as the cradle of coexistence and forgiveness among the various religions and the need to return it to what it was throughout the ages, the cradle of human civilization, while preserving its religious and cultural character and Arab Islamic identity.

The final statement of the Jerusalem seminar called on various countries and international and regional organizations to bolster and support the PLO and Palestinian Authority [PA] stances using all means at their disposal to transfer powers and responsibilities in the occupied territories, including those regarding Jerusalem, to the PA.

The participants in the seminar believe that the Arab League and the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] secretariats should exert efforts to convene a round table in 1996 in the United States to include a certain number of international figures to find a just solution to the Jerusalem issue.

On Sunday, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid opened the meetings of the international seminar on Jerusalem under the slogan "Jerusalem, the City of Peace," which was organized by the Arab League and the ICO.

Article Examines Future of Arab League

95LD0035B Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 27 Jan 95 p 5

[Article by Ibrahim Nafi': "Role of Arab League in the Future"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The general secretary of the Arab League, Dr. Ahmad 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, met this week with the members of the Egyptian Solidarity Committee to complete talks and efforts to reach definite ideas and proposals to be used to promote the Arabs' regional organization. The committee had previously held a conference to discuss issues related to the present and future of the Arab regional system and the Arab League. Disagreements emerged at the conference over the results of the political settlements of the Arab-Israeli conflict and over Israel's future in the region, whether it will be merely a Jewish quarter in an Arab city or will become like the British India Company, which ruled the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. The conference participants also dealt with evaluating the role of the Arab League over the past half century and the future of this role. They raised the issue of changing the charter and the role of Arab intellectuals in reviving pan-Arab thought and promoting the Arab system. They also discussed the role of nongovernmental Arab organizations, which some stressed had played a large role at the time of the league's foundation, one that should be recovered and developed.

At the Arab League general secretary's meeting with the members of the Solidarity Committee, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid spoke with absolute candor about the Arab situation, current and coming challenges to joint Arab action, and the future of the Arab regional organization. In his speech opening the discussions, he made it clear that he would accept with an open mind any criticisms or comments about the performance and role of the Arab League Secretariat. On this subject he said: "My notion is that the goal of those who criticize is reform, not disparagement, and that the attempt to reform arises from concern for the Arab regional organization, whose future we do not want to place in doubt. There is no doubt that the League's future is a subject that has been raised and is being discussed. This is a healthy phenomenon that makes us as trustees over a certain mission and performance—to both of which we have connection and affiliation—welcome both of them for the purpose of sound dealing with the changes and challenges to which the Egyptian Solidarity Committee alluded in the conference it held at which it recommended a meeting with the general secretary of the Arab League."

Some conference participants thought that the role of the Arab League now and in the future had become different from before. The view was based on the idea that the League had been able to maintain its existence and role during the past half century because of the Cold War's domination at the international level and the priority of the Arab-Israeli conflict at the regional level. Against this background the Arab League had been able to contain ideological conflicts. With the end of the Cold War and our coming to be on the verge of peace with Israel, circumstances have changed, and the League must develop to keep pace with them.

Other participants in the conference, which was held before the meeting with the League's general secretary, focused on the international and regional challenges facing the Arab League. International forces have increasingly intervened in the region and its problems. This became evident not only in the Gulf crisis and the Somali problem, but also in the ongoing political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There are also increasing challenges by major regional powers such as Iran and Turkey, not to mention Israel, and their involvement in the region's affairs against the interests of the Arab regional system.

The conference participants also raised the role of the Arab League's permanent secretariat, increasing its efficiency level, and changing the charter to accord with changes. However, many participants considered the General Secretariat merely a tool to carry out the Arab will, with neither independence nor special responsibility. Thus, the fault was not in any shortcoming of the charter; it was because of lack of Arab will that the Arab charters had not been implemented. In this context, many participants stressed the importance of raising the subject of adherence to charters, rather than the subject of changing the Arab League charter—not to mention

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the fact that the League's General Secretariat had prepared an integrated series of proposals to advance and the League's role and render it more effective. These proposals gained the collective approval of member nations and were in step with accelerating radical changes on the Arab and international scenes.

In his meeting with the Egyptian Solidarity Committee, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid stated that we all must engage in self-examination to discover whether the circumstances we are experiencing are natural ones inseparable from us or transitory ones that will finally pass away. Such an examination is necessary when we see the size of the changes, which no one 10 years ago would have believed could happen, regardless of their causes or aims. He made it clear that such an examination might take a long time, but that that would not be harmful as problems are not solved overnight. Whether the changes exist within the Arab nation—and they do indeed exist in varying degrees among the countries—or in our environment surrounding us, or in the world as a whole, the subject of them should be raised for discussion.

The League's general secretary explained that there are existing challenges that must be dealt with. He said that his concept for dealing with them was that the new conditions facing us might contain opportunities of which the Arab world could avail itself and from which it could benefit; however, they might contain dangers against which it could take precautions and not expose itself to more of them. Both things were possible. He then specified some of the most important challenges.

1. The peace process. This is a complicated term for matters of great seriousness and depth. Discussion of them takes us back not just to the Madrid conference, but perhaps to the time when the idea of peace between Egypt and Israel began.

Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said: "I think that the peace process demands of us that we deal with it as the most prominent challenge existing today. There may be more than one theory about how to deal with it. We have many examples before us of the difference between balanced, studied, programmatic dealing, and the haste that we see on the part of some countries. I say this in sorrow, for the loss here is not limited to errors from which the other side can benefit; more dangerously, the results of such dealing can affect Arab public opinion with frustration and loss of confidence. Nothing is more serious than for nations to lose their confidence and see themselves as incapable of dealing with many situations."

2. The repercussions of the Gulf crisis, which we have been experiencing since August 1990. By all measures this is a serious challenge that has pursued us to the present day and to which we know no end. What happened—Iraq's attack on Kuwait—was no spontaneous overnight reaction; it was an operation that required preparation, planning, and organization. Some among us advocated and defended it. What I heard from a top-level Iraqi official on 3 August, that a new sun would shine on the Gulf region, stunned me.

The League's general secretary explained that in this way he wanted to portray matters that he had experienced and engaged in from his previous position to prove that he would look to the future realistically, not theoretically or as a mere intellectual exercise.

3. Arab reconciliation. This is a challenge related to the entire Arab condition. Its exigencies are embodied in the challenges that face the Arab nation today. Approximately two years have passed since the initiative that the Arab League general secretary made to Arab kings and presidents on 22 March 1993 on the 48th anniversary of the League's establishment.

After Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid described the stages of preparing the initiative, he expressed his great happiness that the trilateral summit in Alexandria had turned its attention to the subject of reconciliation. President Husni Mubarak first turned his attention to it in his speech to the People's Assembly and Consultative Council. Then he raised the issue in the al-Aqabah summit with King Husayn, saying: "Reconciliation is a subject on the table. It does not mean that I should say, 'God forgive what is past.' Reconciliation is desirable because I want the one who erred to explain to me the reason for his error."

4. Economic cooperation. This is a challenge of great importance, as the matter demands a definite strategy for the Arab world. In the view of the Arab League's general secretary such a strategy has become necessary in light of the challenges he mentioned. As part of his discussion of the subject he alluded to the conference he held after attending the Casablanca economic summit and to the Dubayy conference between the Arab and European communities to study the effects of economic blocs on the Arab world.

Regarding the former, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid asked, "Where do we stand with regard to the idea of the Middle Eastern market and what is being published about it?" The Egyptian Solidarity Committee had discussed the subject at its earlier conference, where the consensus was that tying and linking the Middle Eastern system to the Arab League was unnatural or illogical. The Arab League was a regional organization based on a national identity and on common ties and constants uniting its members. There was also consensus that the tidings proclaimed by advocates of the Middle Eastern system remained amorphous and unclear. Was it to be only an economic organization, or was it to be comprehensive? What countries would belong to it? Who would be in charge of selection and rejection?

At its conference the Egyptian committee also discussed at length the question that the Arab League's general secretary had raised about the future of the Israeli role in the region: whether the Arabs would be able to make Israel merely a Jewish quarter in an Arab city, or whether Israel

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would become in the Arab world like the British East India Company, which ruled the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent in the past. In the course of answering the question, the participants listed the possibilities for the Arab system to oppose the Middle Eastern project and Israeli ambitions to become a major regional power at the expense of the Arab system. Consideration was given to the idea that international conditions were ready for this and that one might take advantage of the existence of antagonisms among the major international powers, such as the antagonism between the European Union and the United States, not to mention the problems and antagonisms within the United States itself. There was also the possibility of Arab interaction with regional powers such as Japan, China, and the African countries. All this, however, was conditional first and last on fully organizing and coordinating Arab relations and on having the moves in the region come from the Arabs themselves.

Regarding the Dubayy conference in the UAE [United Arab Emirates], the Arab League's general secretary explained that he had requested the establishment of an Arab free zone. The idea had been suggested to him by his first visit to Dubayy's Jabal 'Ali zone, which he thought was more advanced than Singapore and Hong Kong. It occupies an area of 100 sq km and contains more than 350 factories. Thus it is a model to be imitated. Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said in this regard, "We have the resources that prepare us to deal successfully with the economic challenges." He pointed to the meeting he had held with Palestinian financial and economic figures headed by 'Abd-al-Majid Shawman to prepare for larger conferences to deal with the issues of reconstruction and economic and social development in the Palestinian territories.

At the Arab League general secretary's meeting with members of the Egyptian Solidarity Committee, some brought up the challenge of Israeli nuclear forces and the need for an Arab League initiative to formulate a single Arab stand on the issue. It was clear from the responses that the Arab League Council had studied the matter at Egypt's request and had unanimously decided to support her position and form a seven-country committee to do two things: formulate a common Arab understanding and come up with a draft agreement to declare the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. The committee had met. Surprisingly, those who attended the meeting represented 14 countries, which demonstrated the great interest of all the Arab countries. The common understanding had been formulated. As for the draft agreement, Egypt had been assigned to draw it up in cooperation with the League's General Secretariat. It will be ready for discussion on the Arab League's agenda at its next session on 22 March. One should note that this date comes before the April conference to sign the extension of the nuclear weapons Nonproliferation Treaty.

Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said that the subject has major priority in the current situation and that the General Secretariat would coordinate its positions with the Arab countries. Some ideas have not crystallized yet. For example, should the extension of the treaty, which expires this year, be limited in time or should it be for an indefinite period, as desired by the United States? He explained that his personal assessment was that some countries would not sign the treaty if there were a determination that it remain in effect indefinitely without a set term. Some countries might announce their withdrawal from the treaty or announce reservations. Thus, as the Arab League's general secretary sees the issue, there are various options. There will be a desire to unify the Arab position, because there are fears that some countries may sign the treaty even if it is extended for an unlimited time.

The discussion included the position of Iran. The general secretary explained that his personal assessment was that the attack on Iran regarding its nuclear armaments was intended to justify Israel's continued retention of nuclear weapons. At the same time, Iran itself was not helping to deal with its neighbors as a fraternal country with no ambitions in the region. One indication of this was Iran's occupation of the three islands belonging to the UAE. This was an infringement of the Arab states and an infringement on the right of countries to live in peace and as good neighbors.

The discussion covered amending the Arab League charter and setting in motion the process of establishing the Arab Court of Justice actually provided in the charter. Its establishment has been delayed for 50 years, until the issuance of its fundamental ordinance has now become imminent. The meeting concluded that the Arab League's General Secretariat was indeed shouldering its responsibilities by exercising maximum initiative in light of existing circumstances, most of which have arisen from particular Arab policies. It also concluded that success in dealing with current challenges would assure promotion of the Arab regional system represented by the Arab League, the oldest regional institution with a pan-Arab identity.

Islamic Affairs

Brotherhood Alliances for Elections Viewed

NC1303123695 Cairo SABAH AL-KHAYR in Arabic 2 Mar 95 pp 8-11

[Report by Rida Hammad: "Secrets of the Muslim Brotherhood's Plan for the Upcoming Election; Muslim Brotherhood Terrorizes Government"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Will the escalating crisis between the government and the "outlawed" Muslim Brotherhood affect the Brotherhood's status in the parliamentary elections in November? All the signs are that the Brotherhood is determined to contest the elections with all its power. The evidence is that the group decided not to participate in the Consultative Council elections, which will be held five months before the parliamentary

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elections, to save money and effort, and because it does not believe the Consultative Council is useful.

But the Brotherhood is entering the elections this time besieged by accusations that it supports terrorism. Its leadership, therefore, was very eager to break the psychological barrier created among the public as a result of this.

The Muslim Brothers' plan this time is based on glorifying their achievements during the parliamentary terms of 1984 and 1987, the only terms they served in parliament. They started their preparations early, a few months ago. They chose Dr. 'Isam al-'Aryan, a member of the Brotherhood Guidance Bureau (now in prison; he was arrested along with 27 other Brotherhood leaders on suspicion of forming a secret organization to overthrow the government), as a general supervisor to prepare for the election battle, choose candidates, and make attempts to establish alliances and coordination with opposition parties, although there is no need for these parties.

The objective of playing up the achievements of past parliamentary terms during the upcoming elections, or what the group, in its language, terms "the empowerment [al-tamkin]," prompted Brotherhood leaders to decide to seek alliances with opposition parties. There have been reports about various such efforts, whether to maintain the traditional alliance between the Brotherhood and both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, with which the Brotherhood contested the 1987 elections, or to move toward the Wafd Party or even toward the group's historical enemies (the Nasirites); this last effort was confirmed by sources close to the two sides, and this is described as a surprise. Here the sources pointed out that such coordination will not be made public and will not take direct forms, but will be part of the "reconciliation" agreement reached between the two sides at a Beirut conference (the pan-Arab conference), in which elements close to the Brotherhood participated.

What is new about these alliances is that the issue was not originally part of the Brotherhood plan for the elections. It emerged only after the security campaign against the group leadership, a campaign that began to escalate after the government realized for sure the growing danger of the Brotherhood, its close link with terrorist groups, and its backing for them materially and morally. Because of this, Brotherhood leaders were afraid that their political influence in the street might decline. The Brotherhood has recently become very conceited, after taking control of many professional associations, penetrating mosques and charitable societies, and providing some simple services to the poor. The group thought it could contest the elections on its own without alliances with anyone, especially after the decision to hold the polls on the basis of votes for individuals. But after the painful security blow the group received and the discovery of its involvement in supporting terrorist leaders materially, the Brotherhood leaders knew they would be in a weak position in the elections and therefore began to seek alliances in various directions, as revealed by a source close to the group.

The Brotherhood's first direction is to contest the elections with an alliance like that formed for the 1984 and 1987 elections. Brotherhood leaders publicly reaffirmed their eagerness to maintain the traditional alliance with the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. This alliance has become increasingly slack, because Labor Party leaders, notably Secretary General 'Adil Husayn, fear that the Muslim Brothers will penetrate the party and control its organizational structures.

The Brotherhood leaders also renewed their contacts with elements close to them in the Wafd Party for election coordination. Brotherhood Deputy General Guide Mustafa Mashhur and Brotherhood official spokesman Ma'mun al-Hudaybi recently met Dr. Nu'man Jum'ah, the Wafd Party deputy leader, in his party office. They agreed to coordinate the election battle by dividing constituencies on the basis of the candidate's power, and in a way that would ensure each side the victory of its candidate through support from the other side. [passage omitted]

The other direction, or the surprise, is to use the Lawyers Syndicate, controlled by a Brotherhood majority, to open channels of contact with elements from the al-Jihad Organization and the Islamic Group outside prison through a Brotherhood lawyer in the syndicate. Information was leaked that the terrorist groups would support the Brotherhood in the elections.

Observers following this information described it as a mere attempt by the Brotherhood to twist the government's arm to prompt it to stop its campaign against the group. They said the Brotherhood is sending a message to the government that the Islamic movement, in all its shades, can unite, demonstrate solidarity, and create a salvation front in Egypt similar to that in Algeria.

But what is ironic in this information is the position of the terrorist organizations toward the Brotherhood as a group and their position on the election issue itself. These positions may foil the Brotherhood's attempt to pressure the government. [passage omitted]

With these Brotherhood efforts, plans, and maneuvers, and the Brotherhood beating the drums of the election war much too early, the prominent question posed by political circles concerns the Brotherhood's ability to win parliamentary seats, and how many, especially as the upcoming elections are the first to be held since the wave of terrorism erupted under the name of Islam in 1992. All the nation's forces stood against this wave; the Brotherhood support for the terrorist groups has been revealed, detonating a permanent crisis between the Brotherhood and the government. According to the latest details of this crisis, 28 prominent Brotherhood leaders are now accused of supporting terrorists and forming a secret organization to overthrow the government.

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Some observers believe that arresting Brotherhood elements may turn them into martyrs of democracy and may help win the sympathy of voters. They note that earlier interrogations of many Brotherhood members were not complete from the legal point of view; the last was the case of the Salsabil Organization, in which all the defendants were released.

But security sources have stressed that the latest case, in which 28 Brotherhood leaders stand accused, may be the most complete case as far as the legal aspects are concerned. The sources point out that the investigation papers prove that the accused worked through a secret organization, the meetings of which were monitored; that they held meetings outside Egypt for the so-called Muslim Brotherhood International Organization; and that after their return they supervised secret elections held among the Muslim Brothers to elect a shura council for the Brotherhood.

These are the facts and expectations. But can we actually predict how the discovery of the Brotherhood plans will affect the group's election status?

The group's leaders stress that what is happening to them will only strengthen their position and add to their popularity in the elections. But the question is: Why is the group trying to expand the circle of its alliances at this particular time, something it used to reject? [passage omitted]

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 7 Mar

NC1203103195

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 7 March edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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PARTY LEADERS VIEWS ALLIANCE WITH BROTHERHOOD

A 3,000-word interview with Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri on the alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood and the coming elections is published on page 3.

ISLAMIC GROUP THREATENS WAR AGAINST UNITED STATES

An unattributed report on a statement by the Islamic Group, issued on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr and said to be published by the London-based Arabic language newspaper AL-HAYAH, is published on page 1. The 400-word report refers to the statement's sharp criticism of the United States and its "explicit threat" against Americans. The statement said: "It is high time for the United States to realize that the confrontation with Islam and its symbols is beyond its capacity." The statement added that the "U.S. arrogance in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, and against Islamic symbols and ulema can be stopped only at the hands of the mujahidin who desire martyrdom for the love of God, the same as the Americans' love of life." The statement added: "The weak have no place on earth today and the law of the jungle, dictated by the United States under the disguise of the so-called new world order, will not be restrained by the pretentious respect of international rules and laws." The statement vowed to launch a "war against the enemies of Islam, the enemies of freedom, and the enemies of humanity everywhere." The report notes that political observers in Cairo have taken a deep interest in the Islamic Group's statement and treated it as a qualitative turn in the language of the group, which in the past focused on criticizing the Egyptian Government or claiming responsibility for operations carried out by its members in Egypt. The same observers, according to the report, expect the group to take tougher positions against the Americans, particularly following the recent measures adopted by the U.S. Government, such as freezing the assets of some religious groups and individuals, including Muhammad Shawqi al-Islambuli and 'Abbud al-Zumur.

ORGANIZATION DEPLORES PRISON CONDITIONS

The Egyptian Human Rights Organization [EHRO], in a statement issued in early March, urged the People's Assembly to form a parliamentary fact-finding committee to examine the prison conditions in Egypt, writes Jamal Imbabi in a 500-word report on page 1. The organization "expressed deep concern at the continued ban imposed by the Interior Ministry on visits to all prisoners and detainees in the al-'Aqrab [Scorpion] Prison since 20 December 1993" and regretted the ministry's closure of Turah Prison before visitors, in disregard of the court rulings. The statement added that the ban on visits "reflects the desire of some Interior Ministry officials to impose a blackout on the deteriorating conditions in prisons and seeks to impose a further siege on prisoners and detainees to prevent them from conveying their complaints about maltreatment and torture." The statement explained that under the ban, restrictions are placed on contacts by lawyers in general and EHRO lawyers in particular with prisoners. Among these restrictions, the application requesting a visit must be accompanied by a power of attorney made by the prisoner, which is impossible to make if the prisoner is denied visits, the statement noted.

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EDITOR VIEWS STRUGGLE OF SURVIVAL WITH ISRAEL

Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn, in a 3,500-word article on page 2 entitled "Yes, Peace Is On the Brink of the Abyss" comments on articles written by AL-AHRAM Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi on the Middle East peace and Israel. In his article, Husayn refutes Nafi's notion that Israel is a "fate" with which we have to deal and that the peace option with Israel is a strategic option. He adds: "If the Egyptian and Arab leaders have entered into an open struggle with Israel without a clear-cut plan, this does not mean that capitulation is the realistic and sound solution. It also does not mean that our slogan about the struggle with Israel being a struggle for survival and not for borders is outdated and outmoded." Proof of this, he adds, is Israel's obstinate insistence on "territorial expansion," which according to him means that Israel uses the expansion of borders as part of its struggle for survival. According to Husayn, Israel has not abandoned its "aggressive" designs against Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria and continues to harbor "animosity" toward Egypt, which is Israel's number one challenger. Unlike the Arabs, Husayn argues, Israel does not believe that the road to peace is the road to salvation. He points out that this does not mean that "we should enter an immediate war with Israel." However, he adds, duty calls on us to "be always prepared for this eventuality, like any nation that respects itself, and part of this preparation requires that the official media cease to depict the Israeli entity as the holy of hollies." Concluding, Husayn adds: "The Israelis are digging their own graves and they are not as powerful as you think. They are still afraid of a single fedayeen operation, but in the meantime they are unable to give genuine concessions."

CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS OF ISLAMISTS DEMANDED

Islamic writer 'Abd-al-Mun'im Salim Jibarah, in a 2,500-word article entitled "The Islamic Current and the Citizenship Rights" on page 5, notes that the Egyptian Government, in defiance of all just laws and in disregard of public reality, has ruled to deny members of the Islamic current, which he says is the "largest popular force in this country, the "rights of citizenship." Explaining, Jibarah notes that the government maintains numerous laws that deny people the right of expression, such as the emergency law, the press law, and the party law. If this does not serve the purpose, he adds, the government has a list of "ready made" accusations of working to overthrow the regime, possessing banned publications, and operating illegitimate groups to use against its opponents. He adds: "The honorable government does not know and does not want to know anything about the Islamic current except that it is one that seeks, through imaginary accusations, to jump to power, one that looks forward eagerly to seize power, and one that does everything to unseat the rulers from their positions." Under these fallacies, he adds, the government has armed itself with many abnormal "weapons" to impose its domination on everybody. The latest battle by the government, he explains, is the one it made up against the Professional Associations to remove their boards. Backed by what he terms the "tailors" of law at the parliament, the government amended the associations' law less than one year after it was passed, allegedly to end financial irregularities at these associations. After refuting the government's charges of irregular handling of the associations' money, Jibarah advises the government instead to look into the books of the national press, which he says is heavily subsidized at the expense of taxpayers and which serve as propaganda "trumpets" for the government. Jibarah points out that the people know what is genuine and what is "fabricated" and that their silence is not a sign of approval as much as it is a sign of denunciation. Concluding, he asks: Will the government acknowledge the right of "partnership" for all parties, including the Islamic current and come to terms with all parties on the need for the coming elections to be fair, thus enabling the people to give their confidence to whoever they wish?

'ID AL-FITR SERMONS, INCIDENTS REPORTED

A 1,200-word report on page 6 notes that despite the "campaigns of arrests" against "hundreds of Islamists" that preceded 'Id al-Fitr—a religious holiday observed by Muslims at the end of the month of Ramadan—and despite the tight security measures adopted by the government, "millions" of worshipers have taken out to "open places" throughout the country to observe the 'Id al-Fitr prayers. In Cairo, Islamic Preacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali led the prayers at the Mustafa Mahmud Mosque. In his sermon, Shaykh al-Ghazali called on Arabs and Muslims to close their ranks under the banner of Islam and condemned the "massacres" against Muslims in Bosnia and Chechnya. In al-Tibbin, south of Cairo, clashes between worshipers and State Security Forces took placed after Shaykh 'Ali Fath-al-Bab was prevented from leading the prayers. The report notes that on the first day of 'Id al-Fitr "dozens of Islamic current youths" were arrested and "tortured" at the State Security Intelligence Department in Hulwan and were released a day later. In Bany Suwayf, the report notes that it was not possible to conduct the prayers in some districts because of the detention of Islamic group leaders, who have in the past rallied worshipers to observe the prayers.

JAILED BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS REFUTE CHARGES

In his 3,500-word report on page 7, Khalid Yunus writes on the investigations conducted with jailed members of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB], whom he says are accused by the government of belonging to "a secret group that seeks to infiltrate key state institutions and popular sectors to take command of them in preparation for establishing an Islamic state." Dr. 'Isam al- 'Iryan, assistant secretary general of the Doctors Association, was questioned for six hours by the prosecution, the

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report notes. He explained that the "Muslim Brotherhood does not exist from the organizational point of view" and that it is a mere "ideology" adopted by a certain sector in the society. He noted that a case is still being examined by the State Council to determine the legal and legitimate status of the MB. Pending a decision on this matter, people who believe in the MB operate through the state's institutions. He pointed out that the principles and goals of this ideology are not in conflict with the law and the Constitution and does not need to operate secretly, since it operates publicly in official bodies, such as the Doctors Association and the People's Assembly, when the MB was represented in the parliament. He noted that he had been arrested for the positions and opinions he expressed when he was a parliament member between 1987-1990 and for his active role in the Doctors Association. Asked about the ideology of the MB, Dr. al-'Iryan answered that this ideology is based on "positive participation" in all the society's institutions with a view to correcting the existing conditions, establishing justice, serving the interests of all citizens without discrimination because of gender, color, or religion, respecting national unity, and preserving the fabrics of the society made up of Muslims and Christians." Responding to the accusation that the MB has made a plan to change the regime after taking command of key institutions, Dr. al-'Iryan noted that Egypt is a Muslim country and that Islamic shari'ah is its main source of legislation, according to the Constitution. He added: "Any citizen is required to work toward the implementation of these constitutional clauses within the law, and any government that suspends the implementation of this article is one that violates the constitutional legitimacy and deserves to be questioned." For his part, Dr. Ibrahim al-Za'farani, head of the Doctors Association in Alexandria, dismissed the charge of joining religious groups, adding that his activity does not go beyond his duty as head of the association in Alexandria. Ahmad Mahmud, head of the local council in Suez, denied any connection with the MB, adding that he is a member of the Labor Party.

The defense team representing the jailed members stressed that the charges made against the defendants are unfounded and that they only show how the government antagonizes whoever belongs to the Islamic current. The defense called for the release of all defendants without bail. The report gives the names and occupation of 26 defendants who are still held in custody in connection with this case.

ENGINEERS REMOVE ASSOCIATION HEAD

A 1,200-word report by Khalid Yunus on pages 1 and 6 notes that an extraordinary general meeting of the Engineers Association, held on 6 March, unanimously decided to "withdraw the confidence" from association head Engineer Hasaballah al-Kafrawi in view of his actions, which "threaten the interests of engineers." Dr. Sa'd al-Rajihi, first deputy head of the association, was chosen to be acting head and authorized to take all the necessary measures to preserve the association. The general meeting rejected the appointment of a receiver to run the association and requested a meeting with the president of the republic to explain the facts to him.

PARTY MEMBERS ARRESTED IN AL-MINYA

A 400-word report by Ahmad Mahjub on pages 1 and 6 notes that approximately 15 persons, mostly members of the Labor Party and the Local Council in the city of Matay in al-Minya, have been arrested as part of a security sweep during 'Id al-Fitr. In addition, the report notes that worshipers there have been prevented from conducting prayers in "public places" or outside the mosques. The detainees were accused by the State Security Prosecution of "possessing leaflets and putting up signs calling for suspending the provisions of the Constitution and the law and promoting hatred for the regime." According to Shaykh Mustafa Hammad, Labor Party secretary in al-Minya, the signs for which the party members were arrested have been present in the streets for more than 10 years without objections.

A 200-word unattributed report on the same page notes that a Cairo court on 27 February ordered the release of 6 Labor Party members, who were detained on 1 January for opposing the arrest of Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn.

AL-GHAZALI SAYS ISLAMIC IDENTITY THREATENED

In his 400-word column on page 12, renowned preacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali notes that the Islamic identity is under threat from the "Israeli normalization" and "Francophone influence", which he says are both racing to "distance us from our religion and finish off our heritage." He cites as an example the French Government's decision to ban girls from wearing the veil, or head scarf, as a symbol of Islam. He adds: "As is known, France is one of the most spiteful nations against Islam, its teachings, and its history. It fights the Islamic culture as well as the Islamic symbols in continuation of the mission started by its noble son Peter the Hermit [advocate of the first Crusade] and in disregard of its Muslim allies, who are shadowed by the honorable flag of the Francophone." As for the normalization with the Jews, he adds, it requires that Muslims willingly accept the occupation of Jerusalem and most of Palestine and rewrite the Jews' old and modern history in a way to show respect for them, something that runs contrary to the Jews' "tragic" deeds as depicted in the Koran. Accordingly, he adds, the normalization of relations "necessitates the changing of history" and the changing of the "Islamic identity" to appease the Jews.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WELCOMES SAUDI-YEMENI ACCORD

The Muslim Brotherhood, in a 150-word on page 6, welcomes the recent border agreement between Yemeni and Saudi Arabia. The statement notes that the "Praise

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be to God, the rational dialogue, coupled with goodwill and sincere intentions, has borne fruit, dispelled the specter of armed fighting, and replaced it with fraternity." The statement notes that the accord is a "model" to be followed in resolving existing or future disputes among Arab and Muslim countries and even in ending "domestic problems that occur among people of the same country." It adds: "For the lesson is one and the same: Rational dialogue and amicable understanding, not violence and persecution, settle differences."

RELEASE OF GULF DETAINEES URGED

A 300-word unattributed report on page 6 notes that the human rights organization Liberty has called for the release of Islamic writer and thinker Shaykh 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-'Ali and his colleague 'Abd-al-Jalil 'Ulwan, secretary of the Islamic Forum in Gulf emirate of al-Shariqah, who have been locked up in the United Arab Emirates [UAE] since mid January without being indicted. Relatives of Shaykh al-'Ali have been promised by some UAE officials that his detention will not last long and that he will be freed to travel anywhere he wants, but nothing of the sort has happened. Their relatives fear that the UAE authorities may hand them over to Iraq, where they could be executed for their opposition to Iraq, the report adds.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat To Meet Al Gore in Jericho 23 Mar

JN1603193895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat will receive U.S. Vice President Al Gore in Jericho on 23 March in Jericho. Al Gore will make a tour of the area to advance the peace process.

President 'Arafat will arrive in Jericho on board Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's airplane, and will stay there for four days, during which he will learn about the problems of citizens and will hold several meetings with many figures and heads of establishments in the West Bank.

On this visit, colleague Fathi al-Barqawi spoke to al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim [secretary general of the Palestinian Authority]:

[Begin recording] [al-Barqawi] Brother al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, since yesterday, the news agencies have been reporting news about the possibility of President Yasir 'Arafat going to Jericho. How true is this news? Some of it says that President 'Arafat will go to Janin during this visit.

['Abd-al-Rahim] The information I have so far is that President 'Arafat will use the airplane of his Excellency President Mubarak to move from Gaza to Jericho in order to meet with U.S. Vice President Al Gore there. The president may stay there for two, three, or four days. He will hold talks with all leaders and forces in the Jericho area and the West Bank. He will learn about all the problems. So far, safe passage, as stipulated in the agreement with the Israelis, is not available. Therefore, the movements of the president are difficult. As for Janin, according to the information I have thus far, the brother president will not be able to visit any area from which the occupation forces have not withdrawn. As for the news that he will visit Janin, I think it is unlikely. However, personalities from Janin and from all areas will come to the brother president and will meet with him in Jericho area.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you. [end recording]

'Arafat Chairs Executive Committee Meetings

JN1603210095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat presided over PLO Executive Committee meetings in Tunis this evening after the [Fatah] Central Committee meetings broke with the understanding that they would be resumed later tonight.

With regard to the Palestinian leadership meetings in Tunis, [Fatah Central Committee member] Hakam Bal'awi spoke to colleague Fathi Barqawi, saying:

[Begin recording] [Bal'awi] We can now say that the Central Committee meetings began yesterday evening under brother Yasir 'Arafat with all Central Committee members in attendance. Brother Yasir 'Arafat thoroughly reviewed the peace process and the obstacles it has experienced due to Israeli procrastination, prevarication, and the refusal to implement the agreements signed with the PLO. Moreover, he explained the unfavorable state of affairs created by the closure of the territories and the siege of camps and cities, particularly the city of Jerusalem. 'Arafat also touched on land confiscations and the expansion of settlements, which are all in violation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. He briefed the conferees in detail on the meetings he has held with Peres, Christopher, Major, and leaders of the Socialist International movement.

The meetings were filled with a positive spirit and a profoundly high sense of responsibility. After brother President 'Arafat thoroughly reviewed these issues and developments, some brothers, particularly from inside the Palestinian territories, explained the state of affairs of the new Palestinian agencies and bodies launched upon the return to the homeland. The meetings continue. Tonight, another lengthy meeting will be held. During that meeting, all Central Committee members will spell out their views on the current state of affairs and the current impasse. They will present objective views on the ways to address this impasse and make Israel honor the Palestinian-Israeli accords negotiated in Oslo and Cairo.

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[Barqawi] This concerns the peace process. What about national unity and efforts to begin talks with other factions?

[Bal'awi] Lengthy discussions were also held regarding all Palestinian political factions and the need for a profound political dialogue with all of them. The consistent option of Fatah has always been to pursue democratic action, to consecrate and promote democratic traditions, and to open extensive and objective dialogues to strengthen and promote the Palestinian national unity and to facilitate the achievement of Palestinian objectives and give each faction the opportunity to engage in a collective effort, which could help stabilize the situation, particularly since we need to meet the challenges posed by the upcoming phase. [end recording]

President Yasir 'Arafat had earlier briefed Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on the results of the talks he held with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and British Prime Minister John Major in Gaza this week, and also on the outcome of the meeting he held with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres on Thursday [9 March]. President 'Arafat thanked Ben Ali during the meeting he held with him in Tunis today for the efforts Tunisia has made to expedite the resumption of the multilateral talks. President 'Arafat said that the Tunisian moves made in this regard could contribute toward accelerating the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement.

'Arafat, Opponent Exchange Words at Fatah Meeting

NC1703085795 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A participant in the Fatah Central Committee meeting held under Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has said that at the end of its meeting last night, the committee decided to postpone its discussions until today. At last night's meeting 'Arafat and an opponent exchanged vituperative words. The argument between 'Arafat and Brigadier General Muhammad Jihad, a military official in Fatah, was so heated that 'Arafat's guards entered the hall. Later the Palestinian leader left the hall.

Brig. Gen. Jihad accused the Palestinian police in the self-government area in the Gaza Strip of including criminals among its ranks. 'Arafat retorted: How dare you say I protect criminals.

The session resumed [as heard] and Faruq Qaddumi and Hani al-Hasan spoke, demanding that the negotiations with Israel be stopped.

Divisions Said To Split Fatah Movement

NC1703114095 Paris AFP in English 1115 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tunis, March 17 (AFP)—Yasir 'Arafat's mainstream Fatah movement met here Friday [17 March] in the absence of one of the PLO leader's critics after bitter exchanges between the two men, Palestinian officials said.

General Muhammad Jihad, a member of Fatah's central committee, decided to boycott Friday's meeting after discussions broke down in disarray on Thursday.

The 50-year-old military official who fought with Fatah in Jordan and Lebanon had charged in press comments that "criminals" were part of the Palestinian police force operating on the autonomous Gaza Strip.

"How dare you say I am harbouring criminals," 'Arafat angrily retorted Thursday, prompting Jihad to shower him with insults and forcing the postponement of the meeting until Friday.

Participants said the Fatah meeting, which opened in the Tunisian capital Wednesday, was aimed at restoring Arafat's image as the leader of all Palestinians, both in the self-rule areas and the diaspora.

But the PLO chief's return to the Palestinian headquarters in Tunis has revealed the extent of bitterness felt by those who were sidelined with the launch of autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho last May.

'Arafat is seeking to consolidate the foundation of the nation," PLO executive committee member Yasir 'Amr told AFP.

"His presence on the national soil is essential, but this does not mean that he is not concerned with the diaspora. There will not be any solution as long as the problem of the people as a whole is not solved," he added.

But the old guard has not responded to the conciliatory move and insisted on making 'Arafat account for every decision he has taken in the name of Fatah, triggering the war of words that escalated into insults Thursday.

"You made Fatah put Palestinians in prison, confiscate property, censor the press," Jihad thundered at Wednesday's Fatah meeting, in a reference to the Palestinian Authority's crackdown on hardliners in Gaza opposed to the peace deal with Israel.

"The emotional debate conceals the issue of who the Palestinians' reference is—is it still the PLO and Fatah, or the Palestinian self-rule authority?" a senior PLO official told AFP, asking not to be named.

"The millions of Palestinians living abroad do not feel the impact of self-rule. 'Arafat has to decide—either he restricts himself to Gaza or he keeps the role of leader, and in that case the PLO must be the reference."

The issue was to be raised at a meeting here later Friday of the top PLO body, the executive committee, at the request of several committee members including Abu-Mazin, the Palestinian architect of the peace deal.

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"There is a need to make the PLO executive committee more efficient, the overall supervisor, the Palestinians' highest reference," 'Amr said.

'Arafat moved from the PLO's Tunis headquarters to the Gaza Strip last July to take charge of self-rule.

PA Rejects Israeli Offer of 'State' in Gaza Strip

LD1603184195 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] While the proceedings of Fatah's Central Committee are continuing in Tunis, a minister in the Palestinian National Authority [PNA; Palestinian Authority, PA] has revealed that the authority has categorically rejected an Israeli offer on the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip. Furayh Abu-Middayn, the official in charge of judicial affairs in the Palestinian National Authority, told Israeli radio that the offer was conditional on the postponment of talks on the future of the West Bank for 20 years. He added that the offer was conveyed to the Palestinians by a third party.

Abu-Middayn pointed out that the Israeli proposal included a clause which said that Israel committed itself to remove all Israeli settlements in the [Gaza] Strip. He did not however say when the Israeli offer was made.

Elsewhere, it is worth mentioning that the meeting of the Central Committee of the Fatah Movement last night examined a comprehensive political report on the talks which Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat held this week in Gaza with the U.S. secretary of state. The committee also discussed the peace process in general and ways to bring the talks out of their current deadlock.

The Central Committee of the Fatah Movement resumed its meetings today.

Fatah Member Wants Temporary Freeze to Peace Talks

JN1503163495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Fatah Central Committee member Sakhr Habash has said that Fatah should temporarily freeze negotiations with Israel.

Habash added that the results of negotiations with Israel have thus far not been encouraging. He made this statement before the Fatah Central Committee meeting today.

Habash called for setting up a new mechanism for negotiations with Israel, which, he described, as the only one benefiting from the current manner of negotiations.

Paper Reports U.S. Plan on Redeployment, Elections

TA1403152595 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 8

[Report by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem—Informed Palestinian sources said that the Palestinian National Authority have recently received a plan drawn up by the U.S. State Department that includes a compromise on the issues of the Israeli army's redeployment from the West Bank and the holding of Palestinian elections in two phases, the first one in the third week of April.

According to these sources, the first phase will continue for four months, during which the Palestinian Police will assume responsibility for the towns from which the Israeli army withdraws.

The Palestinian towns comprising the first phase have not been specified, but Israel will condition the implementation of the plan's second phase, which is to begin at the end of the fourth month, on the establishment of security in the first-phase areas.

The sources expect President Yasir 'Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to announce this plan at a tripartite meeting within a few days.

'Abbas Discusses New Book, 'Secret' Contacts

95AA0089A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 22 Jan 95 pp 28-30

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee Member Mahmud 'Abbas by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given: "We Had Secret Contacts With and Exchanged Messages With Labor and Likud Via Israeli Arabs; Everything in My Book Is True and Documented"—first three paragraphs are AL-MAJALLAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Suddenly and without any preamble, the story of the secret Palestinian-Israeli contacts preceding the Oslo accords in the late 1980s and early 1990s have come back again to occupy the preeminent position in Arab, Israeli, and European circles. This is thanks to the new facts PLO decisionmaker Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) recently revealed in his new book "The Road to Oslo," stirring up a political storm in Israeli circles no less grave—in the words of one Israeli Likud Party leader—than the surprise of the Yom Kippur (October) War of 1973.

Abu-Mazin has revealed the facts about direct and indirect contacts between the PLO and prominent and now-official leaders of Israel's ruling Labor Party, through Arabs of the occupied territories such as 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Darawshah, Muhammad Mi'ari, and businessmen Sa'id Kan'an, who carried dozens of mutual messages, and took the role of intermediary. There were other, similar contacts with the hard-line Likud Party, which were fated not to succeed for reasons Abu-Mazin refuses to discuss at the present time.

In his interview with AL-MAJALLAH in Cairo, Mahmud 'Abbas reaffirmed that everything in his book, "The Road to Oslo," is true and accurate, and based on

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documented information and secret letters in his possession bearing the signatures of such people as Ariel Sharon, David Kimche, and senior aides to [Yitzhaq] Shamir. These are the details of the interview:

[AL-MAJALLAH] Why did you choose to publish your book, "The Road to Oslo," at this time?

['Abbas] Like many others, I ask: why have the Israelis and others in the Arab world concocted this hubbub about the book I published in my capacity as a primary participant in the Oslo negotiations with the responsibility of signing the agreement in Washington before the whole world? After all, I published long prepublication excerpts of this book four months ago in numerous Arab and European newspapers, plus the Israeli newspaper HA'ARETZ. So I do not know the main reason Likud stirred up this crisis, unless it is because recent polls said the Likud will win the next Israeli elections; they want to make my book into a scandal they can exploit to support their position. Not one thing in my book harms anyone, either in the Labor Party or the Likud. For my part, I printed the facts as they are, to clear up the truth of the points of view and the efforts that preceded the Oslo process, so we may be sure that the Oslo negotiations did not come out of a vaccuum. If we want to make known the truth of past Palestinian-Israeli contacts—there were two types of contacts. The first was with Arab leaders in the occupied territories, especially the contacts relating to Israeli elections, as we had very close relations with these Arabs. We strengthened their position inside the territories and called upon them to take part in the elections, because we noticed that more than 35 percent of them did not participate in the elections, and we helped them to choose their Arab slates. In the PLO, we consider the liaison with them to be both in their interest and in ours, because when they are strong on the inside, that helps our position and the Israelis' position to move closer together, and helps peace to be achieved. Some of these contacts were known to the Israeli leadership, and we don't hide or deny it.

The second type of contact dealt with secret meetings and contacts with prominent leaders in the Labor and Likud parties. I am saying that these did not happen in the early years, but occurred with the leaders of other parties such as MERETZ, the Progressive Bloc, and others. Then there were preparations, in 1987, for holding the first meeting with Likud, via Moshe Mirasi, one of the Likud leaders, with Sari Nusaybah. There was more than one meeting, and a clear and specific political plan was agreed upon; also, it was agreed that a final meeting would be held subsequently, to crystallize the agreement by President Yasir 'Arafat and Mirasi in Geneva, with our brother Faysal al-Husayni attending. But this meeting was cancelled at the last minute because of Israel's strike against the 'Ayn-al-Hilwah camp and the arrest of Faysal al-Husayni, so the project was aborted. Then immediately after that there were indirect contacts with then-leader of the Likud Sharon, but I halted these contacts after a very short time. Then we pursued other contacts, as we were keen on a dialogue with Likud for one reason: it was the party that held power at that time in Israel. After that I initiated contacts with the Labor Party via Egypt, seeing it as the back channel for arranging direct meetings, but they refused in the beginning, then undertook contacts after that through Arab leaders in the occupied territories.

Cooperation With Labor

[AL-MAJALLAH] How true is the information alleging the PLO cooperated with the Israeli Labor Party, through the Arabs of the occupied territories to bring down Likud in the 1992 elections?

['Abbas] This kind of information came from within Israel and it was the Likud leaders who promoted it. We never had any agreement with the Labor Party in the period in the beginning of the contacts through intermediaries such as al-Darawshah, Mi'ari, Advisor Ahmad al-Tibi, Sa'id Kan'an, and those who constantly carried messages both ways between us, and conveying important information. Our position at that time did not go beyond knowing the point of view of the Labor Party in the peace process. We did not conspire at any time on behalf of Labor versus Likud. Nor did we ever ask any Arab in the occupied territories to vote in favor of this or that party. We worked with Likud when it was in power at the beginning of the negotiations, and had they remained in power, we would have cooperated with them. Plus, if they should return again, we will cooperate and talk with them again. The Israelis are free to choose whomever they want, and consequently our role consists of dealing with everyone who comes to power in Israel.

[AL-MAJALLAH] If all the information in the book is true and accurate, how do you explain the reasons for the recent controversy?

['Abbas] Everything in the book is accurate and documented by information I helped to shape through daily events I was supervising, and responsible for planning and directing the people involved. There are other, more sensational information and documents that I preferred not to print at this particular time. I preferred to wait for some other time, until the right opportunity comes along. I also respected the wish of numerous individuals, both Arabs in the occupied territories and Israelis themselves who took part in shaping many events. I referred to many of them only by their initials, and with others I printed their names when they agreed to that, as in the case of al-Darawshah, Ahmad Tibi, and others. What really surprised me is the Israelis' exploitation of the facts; they tried to exploit me for the sake of their own infighting, and I tell them they have the wrong address—they should look for someone besides me to blame their errors on.

Sa'id Kan'an

[AL-MAJALLAH] What is the truth of the role businessman Sa'id Kan'an played in opening the channels to

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contacts between you and the Labor Party, especially after the recent quarrel over his meetings with Rabin and his aides?

['Abbas] Sa'id Kan'an, as is well known, lived, and still does, in the occupied land, and used to visit us in Tunisia and other places to tell us he had met with Israeli officials. He brought messages from them in which they informed us of their readiness for political action and cooperation with us in order to reach a settlement acceptable to both sides. This is the summary of the messages Sa'id Kan'an brought from them. To tell the truth, I did not print the names of these Israelis and I am not prepared to print them now, unless they are ready to acknowledge their meetings with Sa'id Kan'an; or he may reveal their names, bearing in mind that these meetings took place in secret locations and public places such as the Sheraton Tel Aviv. What Sa'id Kan'an did was to play a patriotic role in which he was serving his cause; he finished the job and we promised him we would never desert him.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Is it true that you participated in secret meetings in 1991 and 1992 with some leaders of the Israeli Labor Party in some European capitals to reach agreement on coordinating roles for the 1992 elections, working with the Arabs of the occupied territories?

['Abbas] That never happened. I never met a single Israeli in the period you mention. All the people we met, whether I or other PLO leaders, were with Arabs in the occupied territories well known to the Israelis, specifically with the Arab Communist Party and the Arab Democratic Party. I can tell you one thing many people do not know, that in my whole life, right down to the present, I have never visited Europe a single time, with the exception of Italy, which I visited in 1991 on the invitation of Yilkatz [name as transliterated]. So where did I meet with those Labor Party Israelis, as the Likud leaders allege?

[AL-MAJALLAH] What is the story of the secret meetings in which you are said to have participated in Cairo, in 1992, in special arrangement with Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Director of the Egyptian President's Office for Political Affairs, to coordinate the Israeli elections?

['Abbas] First, these meetings were not with Israeli officials from either Labor or Likud, because as I already told you they refused to meet directly in the beginning. Arabs from the occupied territories such as Mi'ari, al-Darawshah, Ibrahim Nimr Husayn, and others who visited Egypt participated in the meetings. We wanted to benefit from the experience of Dr. Usamah al-Baz. He attended these meetings with us to organize Arab participation in the Knesset elections with the aim of unifying Arab ranks and cooperating with us in the PLO, and with the Arabs of the occupied territories. This would give a chance to the pro-peace Arab forces inside the territories to achieve some success. And that would help bring points of view closer together. We were suggesting some solutions and mapping out the road for them. These meetings were held more than once in Cairo until the Knesset elections were over.

False Accusations

[AL-MAJALLAH] How true are the charges the Likud leaders make against you and some Egyptian officials, that you tipped the scales for the Labor Party in the 1992 elections to the detriment of the Likud's candidates and supporters?

['Abbas] These are false accusations, and I totally deny them. I in turn repeat to the Likud leaders: Look for someone besides me. I am comfortable with what some Egyptians have said recently: they said frankly that when they meet with Israeli parties, whether Arab or non-Arab, this does not mean that they are interfering in Israel's internal affairs. This is what Dr. Usamah al-Baz personally announced, as well as Muhammad Basiuni, Egypt's ambassador to Israel.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Is it true that you agreed with Labor leaders to keep the Washinton negotiations—which came in the wake of the Madrid conference, with the Likud negotiators—just as they were, without achieving any progress, until Labor should take power in Israel?

['Abbas] Very regrettably, this is what some Israeli Likudists have deliberatly understood from my book. The truth is that they did not read what I said when I asked them, during the negotiations, not to put obstacles in the road to peace, not to discuss the question of Jerusalem now, not to take up the Palestinian state, and not to discuss settlements, because all these matters, if they were to come up even once, would obstruct the negotiations. They forgot everything I said and remembered only one expression: Don't discuss all these topics at once so that Shamir will not take a special position.

[AL-MAJALLAH] What is your comment on what has been said about the adding, by one of your former aides Nabil Abu-Radinah, of new chapters and appendices to the book without your knowledge just before it was printed?

['Abbas] That is absolutely untrue; it never happened. I was the one who supervised the preparation of the book until it was published in its final form.

I Reject Palestinian Excesses

[AL-MAJALLAH] What are the reasons you have distanced yourself from taking part in the course of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations? You have taken no office in the Palestinian Authority [PA]. Is this due to personal conflicts between you and President 'Arafat, or because you reject current Palestinian policies?

['Abbas] It is I who preferred not to take part in the PA. I preferred to remain as I am, as a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, and as a member of Fatah's Central Committee. I have held to my decision not to join the Authority, because I saw the PA deals with

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executive and technical work and filling some positions. I don't see myself doing that. In addition, I reject the practicies in force now, and I do not agree to them. For example, there is repression, the muzzling of the press, and daily security practices in the autonomous areas, as well as certain appointments that have been made. Above all, I reject the Palestinian method now being employed in the negotiations with the Israeli side—it is more than a little chaotic. I preferred to keep my distance and voice my opinion in full frankness without being a dissident. At the same time, I must say, so that my position will not be misunderstood by some, that the PA has failed. The signs so far have not been encouraging. As to what is said about conflicts between me and 'Arafat, these are not conflicts in the usual sense of that word. Abu-'Ammar and I have been friends for 35 years, though this does not prevent us from disagreeing on how to proceed.

Return to the Homeland

[AL-MAJALLAH] Why do you refuse to return and live in the occupied territories, specifically in your village, Safed, or in the autonomous areas, despite the PA's invitation to you on more than one occasion? Do you prefer to live permanently in Tunis?

['Abbas] Who said that? I wish the Israeli and Palestinian authorities would permit me to reside permanently from now on in my village, Safed, in northern Palestine. When I went to the homeland last September, to visit family and the country, there was a huge demonstration that lasted 48 continuous hours in my village, to prtevent me from entering. And in fact I was forced to retreat. I fought for 46 years outside the homeland to achieve this goal, to return and live in my village. I actually have achieved my full identity, and I will return to reside permanently in any village and at the appropriate time.

[AL-MAJALLAH] What are the real reasons you were prevented from entering your village, Safed, especially as those who blocked your way were the actual people of your village?

['Abbas] They did not let me in because of a false accusation dozens of years old. They say I took part in an operation called "Ma'alot." This is a village near our village of Safed, where some Palestinian fedayeen at that time kidnapped some pupils and young people and killed some of them. They were from the Democratic Front, whereas I was in Fatah.

Palestinian-Jordanian Relations

[AL-MAJALLAH] How do you assess Palestinian-Jordanian relations? Is it true that you and Faysal al-Husayni are playing a role behind the scenes to stop the deterioration in these relations and to clear the air for the holding of the summit meeting—postponed more than five times—between President 'Arafat and King Husayn?

['Abbas] Given my relationship with the leadership of both sides, I can say that Palestinian-Jordanian relations are not deteriorating or disintegrating as much as some people say. They will be restored as soon as there is a direct meeting between our brother Yasir 'Arafat and King Husayn.

[AL-MAJALLAH] What will you do about the dispute between you and Jordan over the political custody of the religious holy places in Jerusalem?

['Abbas] The story of custody goes back to the days of the undoing of the link between Jordan and the West Bank. I don't know whether it was good luck or bad luck, because I was the one who oversaw the process of breaking the link. We agreed on all issues except one single issue, which was the custody of the Islamic holy places, which remained in Jordan's care until a settlement of the Palestinian question. Then there was this recent uproar in the last Islamic summit in Casablanca, until the summit settled the issue and custodianship became clear.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Finally, are you satisfied with the level of Arab coordination among some of the Arab sides taking part in the peace process?

['Abbas] Every side is now negotiating on its own. The coordination we had agreed upon during and after the Madrid peace conference has come to an end. The blame is ours, of course, we the Palestinians, because we abandoned this coordination and withdrew from it as soon as the Oslo accord appeared.

Hamas Spokesman Ghawshah on Dialogue, Opposition

JN0803144195 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 8 Mar 95 p 22

[Part one of interview with Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah by 'Urayb al-Rantawi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Rantawi] Let us begin from where the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations ended. You are aware that during a recent meeting in Cairo, the PLO Executive Committee decided to form a national dialogue committee to put the Palestinian house in order. The committee was actually formed during the recent Palestinian National Authority meeting in Gaza. President 'Arafat chairs the committee and Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi is one of its members. What is your position on this call for dialogue? How do you view the Palestinian house?

[Ghawshah] In fact, the issue of dialogue is big and I do not want to elaborate too much on it. Briefly speaking, we can address it from two angles: The principled angle and the procedural angle. I will begin with the procedural angle and then talk about the other one. Based on our past experience, 'Arafat seeks dialogue when he is in trouble. This means he does not seek dialogue for the

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sake of dialogue or for forging national unity or improving the conditions conducive to such unity. He seeks dialogue when he is in trouble and when he wants to get something. Thus, he seeks to overcome a dilemma or make some gains. [passage omitted]

'Arafat is now in a dilemma, a big dilemma called the Oslo agreement. He tries to overcome this dilemma and restore national unity by seeking dialogue with the various Palestinian forces. He tries to contact the Arab countries and the world. He tries to save himself by himself. This is the meaning of dialogue from the procedural point of view.

As for the principled angle, we in Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] cannot embark on dialogue with 'Arafat before we are sure of the ground on which we stand. We believe that abandoning the Oslo agreement and stopping negotiations with the Zionist enemy are a basic condition for the start of dialogue with 'Arafat. We will then not object to holding an in-depth dialogue on the political, national, intellectual, and all other aspects of life. Most of the dialogues that took place in the territories can be termed field dialogues. They were not political or strategic dialogues. They were aimed to ease tension between the Palestinian Authority and the opposition forces, headed by Hamas. Following the Filastin Mosque massacre, it became clear to all that 'Arafat tried to start dialogue between Fatah and Hamas and relieve the authority of responsibility for the massacre. Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, one of 'Arafat's political disciples who adopts pragmatic and machiavellian methods, played this role. He sought to start dialogue between Fatah and Hamas and the latter used to say: Nothing political links us to Fatah. What happened was between worshipers, mostly Hamas supporters, and the Palestinian Authority, which opened fire on them, killing 13 and wounding some 50 others. 'Arafat, with his well known expertise, managed to cover up the affair. We do not think this cover-up is final because the Palestinian people will not forget the blood they shed or their martyrs.

[Al-Rantawi] You said 'Arafat tried to save himself from the impasse by himself through his calls for dialogue and for putting the house in order. Do you not think that 'Arafat is entitled to do that? Is this a point for or against him? In other words, is 'Arafat not entitled to use the pressure cards available on the local, Arab, and international levels, the way Rabin is acting against 'Arafat? Is this not permissible in politics?

[Ghawshah] 'Arafat is not entitled to sign any agreement without being authorized to do so by the Palestinian people. He went to Madrid and then Oslo without any authorization from the people. He represented a limited sector of the Palestinian people. Even the Palestine National Council [PNC] in its latest sessions was not elected by the Palestinian people as testified by 'Arafat's associates and [Fatah] Central Committee members, who said that more than 85 percent of the PNC members were appointed by 'Arafat. Accordingly, the appointed PNC is illegitimate and 'Arafat is not entitled to go to Madrid and Oslo. He is now trying to use such tactics to break out of his impasse.

A few days ago, in a statement to REUTERS, we said that if 'Arafat reached the conclusion that he has reached a dead end, then he should have the courage to say this to the Palestinian people. 'Arafat should say that he and his school were wrong to sign the Oslo Agreement, were wrong to relinquish Palestine and acknowledge the Zionist entity's right to exist, and were wrong to halt the march of struggle and jihad. He should announce this to the Palestinian people.

In the developed countries which respect their public opinion, when one makes a mistake much smaller than this, he steps aside and resigns. 'Arafat was driven to a crisis in Oslo. We in Hamas had predicted that when we read the agreement. We told the entire world that this agreement is stillborn, because when the Jews drafted this agreement, they did not leave 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority any room to breath. This reflects the Jews' way of thinking and their methods. We in the Islamic Movement do not claim to be fortunetellers, but we study the Jews on religious and historical basis in a way which is better than that pursued by those who claim to be advanced in tactical matters and political and administrative action. Therefore, the failure, disappointment, and division which we see now, even inside the Palestinian Authority itself, Fatah Central Committee, and the PLO Executive Committee, are, in our view, the result of the fact that those people have, regrettably, not read Zionism or Judaism very well and did not know exactly what the Jews want. Therefore, they are now reaping the bitter fruit.

We feel that in order to emerge from the big crisis which the Palestinian people are passing through, 'Arafat must reassess his position, step aside, and give the trust back to the Palestinian people. In our view, the solution starts with the Palestinian people choosing their own parliament both from the inside and the diaspora. We believe the Palestinian people are united and we reject division. We do not think that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza alone can decide the future of the Palestinian people. We do not think that the 1948 Palestinians alone can decide the future of the Palestinian people. Nor do we think that the Palestinians in the diaspora alone can decided the future of the Palestinian people. The entire Palestinian people have the right and legitimate power to decide their own future. This can only be achieved by a Palestinian parliament elected, in a democratic free and fair way, from both inside and the diaspora, and away from the influence of political programs. Programs, views, and demands can then be presented to that parliament and it can decide on them. We can then say that the leadership that emanates from this parliament is legitimate and we in Hamas will accept it. [passage omitted]

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[Al-Rantawi] It was recently announced that a national grouping opposing the Madrid-Oslo trend was established under Bassam al- Shak'ah with the aim of toppling that trend. Are you members of this grouping?

[Ghawshah] We are not members of this grouping.

[Al-Rantawi] But Bassam al-Shak'ah said you are members.

[Ghawshah] We are not members of this grouping. We are members of the alliance of factions which was established after the Madrid Conference and which is based in Damascus.

[Al-Rantawi] You mean the 10 faction alliance?

[Ghawshah] Yes, the 10 faction alliance. We are not against this grouping, and we support any Palestinian faction that confronts the Oslo agreement and the series of Palestinian concessions.

[Al-Rantawi] Why did you not join the al-Shak'ah grouping?

[Ghawshah] According to my organization's information, we were not officially asked to join the grouping and therefore we did not join it. We also believe that we do not need any more banners, especially since we think that the alliance of Palestinian factions which was established in Damascus more than a year and a half ago, almost two years ago, is a sufficient banner. Of course, there is a dialogue between us and the other factions concerning the influence of this alliance inside the occupied territories. We have set certain criteria and standards for establishing this alliance inside, but there are certain differences on this subject.

[Al-Rantawi] George Habash has recently expressed his confidence in Bassam al-Shak'ah's ability to unite the Palestinians and to lead this coalition. What is your comment on this, and do you agree on al-Shak'ah's authority?

[Ghawshah] Our decision in the Hamas Movement is clear. We have clear and common criteria in electing any authority. The broadlines I have mentioned would constitute elements which must be available in any authority for the Palestinian people. The most important condition for this authority is, first, that it should be a democratic authority. This means that it should be elected. Second, it should be a true representative of the Palestinian people. We believe that at this stage, the Islamic current is the leader and the mujahid current. We do not ignore the nationalist and pan-Arab current. However, history always shows that there are currents which rise and others which fall. This is the logic of history. The leading current now is the Islamic current. Therefore, if the Palestinian people were consulted, we are convinced that they would elect the Islamic leaderships.

[Al-Rantawi] Sir, it is said that Syria is behind the establishment of the new Palestinian grouping, through Damascus' distinguished relations with some of its factions or with its leaders. What is your comment on this?

[Ghawshah] Hamas has a clear policy toward the Arab axes. We want all the Arab states and axes to support the Palestine question. We do not want any contradictions among the Arab states. We respect Syria and every other Arab state. We believe that their national and principled duty is to support the Palestinian people. One of 'Arafat's fatal mistakes is that he ignored the Arab and Islamic dimensions of the Palestine question. Later, he ignored the largest part of the Palestinian dimension. This dimension has now been reduced to a mere faction. As for Syria, we appreciate its role and that of the other Arab states in supporting the Palestinian people. We believe that Syria still has an effective role to play in the Palestine question in the future.

[Al-Rantawi] You belong to the alliance of the 10 factions. This alliance has also proved that it suffers from a crisis. It was tested and it did not succeed. Except you, in Hamas, the other nine factions enjoy the support of not more than five percent of the Palestinian people. Do you really pin hopes on this alliance to achieve the tasks it has set for itself, or do you view it as being a tactical card which can be used to confront an instant political stand?

[Ghawshah] The 10 factions alliance emerged after the Madrid conference. We, in Hamas, expected that these forces would throw their political, military, and media weight to resist Madrid and what came after it in Oslo and Cairo. As you said, a number of these forces is almost inactive. Based on their leaderships' analyses, some of these forces used to think that the Madrid march cannot be stopped, and that this U.S. bulldozer will crush everything in its way. This is why these Palestinian forces and factions have almost stopped their operations. They are now satisfied with press statements, political stands, and theorizations. This, of course, has weakened the 10 factions. In addition to this, some of these forces have a limited presence inside [the occupied territories]. We do not blame them for this. However, their presence outside is stronger.

We always said that the forces which enjoy a strong presence inside must be provoked and use their entire body. We, in Hamas, spared no effort to confront the Zionist enemy on the vastest possible area. We asked the brothers to contribute to this. The brothers in the [Islamic] Jihad now contribute. Regrettably, the brothers in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine have thus far not thrown their weight as required in the military field. The other forces outside could have carried out operations from outside, particularly from Lebanon, to adjust the balance of powers and to deal blows to the Zionist enemy. We believe that whether the Zionist enemy is attacked from inside or outside Palestine, this will be in favor of the Palestinian people.

On Relations With U.S., Iran

JN0903144795 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 9 Mar 95 p 18

[Part two of interview with Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah by 'Urayb al-Rantawi; place and date not given]

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[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Rantawi] Why Lebanon, specifically?

[Ghawshah] Because it is an open front.

In view of the obstructions, the Alliance of the 10 Palestinian Forces and Factions, in practice, has failed in the role the Palestinian people and many analysts believed it would carry out.

At one time, 'Arafat and the Oslo and Madrid team did what they wanted in the arena without any obstruction or impediment.

But, the escalation of strikes against the Zionist enemy since Oslo, undoubtedly, has weakened the program of the Labor Party and Rabin's government. This also has had its impact on the Palestinian authority and 'Arafat in person. That's why we see they are in an unenviable dilemma.

The entire peace process is deadlocked after it became certain that the Syrian track did not advance, as some have been saying, and the Syrians did not readily join the process. It has become evident that the Syrians will stick to their political stand, which calls for the return of the territories that were occupied on 4 June [as published] 1967. They are ready to wait patiently for several years. It seems that the Syrian stand is stronger than all the other Arab stands, whether from the military, economic, or political point of view.

That's why 1995 is a very important year. Drastic changes could take place this year.

[Al-Rantawi] Your talk about escalating operations through Lebanon reminds me of a new-old dilemma that the Palestinians have faced abroad. Does your earmarking Lebanon as an arena for military operations means that you accept the Arab countries logic which rejects using their borders with Palestine as a passageway for the fighters and military patrols? What don't your movement and the other factions that have Damascus as their headquarters carry out operations through the Syrian border?

[Ghawshah] We in Hamas have a clear strategy that is based on action in the occupied territories. So long as this strategy continues to have a great impact on the Zionist enemy in Palestine, the Hamas Movement believes efforts should focus in this direction to avoid entering into confrontations with other Arab countries.

The wise one is he who learns from others. The Hamas Movement has learned from the history of the Palestinian resistance. We do not want Hamas to enter into useless battles with this or that regime so long as the people in this or that country are not in favor of jihad operations.

We in the Hamas Movement firmly believe that jihad from outside is inevitable, whether it will take place in five years, 10 years, or 15 years from now. We should leave this to domestic factors having to do with the people of every country.

What is very important is that the flame of jihad in the occupied territories remain glowing because the Zionists, Americans, the Palestinian people's enemies, and the enemies of the Muslim Arabs wager on putting out the flame of jihad as quickly as possible before there can be an Arab and Islamic resurgence outside the occupied territories that would provide support for the Palestinian people.

This is the secret of the feverish struggle that is raging between the militant movements in Palestine and the Zionist schemes.

[Al-Rantawi] But it is rumored that there is an undeclared truce between Hamas and Israel. Is it a truce based on your commitment not to carry out major jihad suicide operations in return for a promise to have your detainees, led by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, released? What is your comment?

[Ghawshah] First, I categorically deny that. The battle between Hamas and the Zionist entity is long and ceaseless. Sometimes, this battle intensifies. Sometimes, it proceeds in a moderate fashion. This depends on the circumstances. For example, there was a violent escalation by Hamas in October and December 1994. The brothers in the Jihad Movement escalated struggle in December. There is also the intifadah and other continuous jihad operations. However, regarding the extremely hot and effective operations, they have undoubtedly been affected by the factors surrounding the struggle with the Zionist enemy, including the large-scale detention campaign against Hamas. Some 2,500 strugglers have been detained in the West Bank just since October 1994. Most of them are young people between the ages of 17-27.

Undoubtedly, those detentions affect the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions' program and its effectiveness. Besides, Israel has launched a large campaign against the Hamas institutions and against its infrastructure. The detentions which targeted scholars, mosques, and institutes certainly affect the overall factors involved in the battle against the Zionist enemy.

In addition, there is the political battle led by the Zionists and the Americans in an attempt to force Arab countries to prevent financial support for Hamas or deny Hamas any political ground or media access. All this has been urged by Christopher, whom we call the "Peter of the 20th Century," who instigates the world against the mujahidin of Palestine.

All these factors undoubtedly affect the frequency of operations. However, nobody can prevent such operations.

After the October blows, Rabin proposed, through a number of ministers, the idea of dialogue with Hamas, which rejected the principle of dialogue. Like any other

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people whose land has been occupied, we cannot have a dialogue with those who occupy our territory. Through such a dialogue, the PLO was dragged, over 20 years, into a dialogue with [Israeli] peace forces. Gradually the dialogue was held with the left wing of the Labor Party, which ended in negotiations, recognition, and the agreements that have led to the great deterioration.

[Al-Rantawi] Does this mean that dialogue with the Israelis is out of the question now and in the future?

[Ghawshah] Yes, it is out of the question. As previously indicated by Hamas, dialogue is acceptable only in humanitarian cases, such as the case of the soldier Wachsman. This stand was explained by the movement then, when it proposed through a third party that Wachsman be released in return for releasing Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and the Palestinian women prisoners all at once. However, with his military and racist mentality, Rabin decided to storm the place militarily. The outcome is known.

[Al-Rantawi] Official and semiofficial Palestinian quarters say that their information confirms that the Hamas movement, or part of it at least, has ties with the hardline current inside Iran. These quarters say in particular that the recent escalation in your suicide operations was in response to an Iranian policy that is opposed to the peace process, led especially by the so-called Mohtashemi current within the Iranian leadership. In addition, the high-caliber operations carried out recently have raised questions about the party that is behind the organization,its training, and its financing, and about other issues. What is your comment?

[Ghawshah] The problem with 'Arafat is that he thinks that he is too clever. This is why he issues absolute judgments. He claimed once that there is a Mohtashemi current within Hamas. He also claimed that I myself belong to this current.

[Al-Rantawi] Yes, this is what I meant.

[Ghawshah] I know this, in spite of the fact that I have never met Mohtashemi, not even once in my entire life. The Hamas movement cannot be treated the way 'Arafat treats the other factions. He used to classify them under certain currents. The Hamas movement is characterized by its cohesive intellectual-ideological-political fabric. This fabric is built on firm educational and nationalistic foundations. This is what many other factions lack. 'Arafat cannot interfere with or influence this structure. Nor can he categorize it by attributing it to a hard-line Iranian current, a Jordanian current, or other internal or external currents. We tell 'Arafat that all these things will not enable him to fight Hamas. Hamas is an integrated movement with one fabric. Its objectives are well known. It enjoys patience and does not link a solution to its cause to the ages of its leaders. The battle is long and could take several decades.

This strategic view puts all of the Hamas elements at ease and prompts them to act for the sake of acting. It is not time to eat the cake; it is time for continuous sacrifices. The martyrs, prisoners, and others who offer sacrifices are the ones who are appreciated by God and by the people.

As a matter of fact, our relationship with 'Arafat is old, deep, and strong. When 'Arafat started with the Fatah Movement, his first cadres and early foundations were taken from the Muslim Brotherhood cadres. This is a fact. This is why the Islamic movement understands 'Arafat very well, more than all the other Palestinian factions. The Islamic movement knows well how to deal with 'Arafat. This old-new relationship is at a crossroads now and is experiencing a moment of truth. Differences between Hamas leaders and 'Arafat are not personal. These differences are over the fate of the Palestinian people. Who is more faithful to the Palestinian people? Who offers more services to the Palestinian people? Who wants to return all the Palestinian people to all the land of Palestine? We refuse to cede even an inch of the land of Palestine.

Why should the Palestinian people generously abandon the land of their fathers and forefathers, while all the other Arab peoples refuse to cede an inch of their territories, as the Egyptians did in Sinai and recently in Taba, and as the Syrians, Lebanese, and Jordanians are doing? Why is the 'Arafat leadership, regrettably, the only one that is doing this? The 'Arafat leadership has opened the door for devouring the Palestinian land and crippling the future of the Palestinian people.

This land is holier than all the Arab countries. This land must return to the Arab and Muslim Palestinian people, no matter how long it takes. [passage omitted]

[Al-Rantawi] Let us brush history aside for a while and return to the present. I have learned that contacts have recently been held between you and the U.S. Administration. It was also reported that Musa Abu-Marzuq, member of Hamas' Political Bureau, held these contacts with U.S. officials. How true are these reports?

[Ghawshah] These reports are baseless. The only contacts we had with the United States were those held in late 1992 and 1993 in the wake of the deportation of our leaders to Marj al-Zuhur. To make the picture clearer to you, I would like to say that the United States sent us messages prior to the deportation, requesting a meeting with Hamas, which we rejected.

But when the deportations took place, we reached the conclusion that we must make moves. For, the deportations reflected a crucial development. Some 415 Hamas leaders were thrown into the desert. This required Palestinian, Arab, and international moves. We contacted several states, including the United States, and urged them to do something to mitigate the suffering of the deportees. A meeting was held with a U.S. diplomat on the issue. We handed him a message to the U.S. Government, urging it to put an end to the deportation.

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Two or three months later, a second meeting was held with the U.S. diplomat at his own request. During this meeting, the deportations were discussed. A discussion was also held on the rationale for the resistance carried out by Hamas. We told the U.S. diplomat that Hamas' resistance is a form of legitimate struggle and not terrorism. We did so because the enemy was making a fuss about what it called Hamas' terrorism. These are the only two meetings held between Hamas and the Americans.

Two months later, the Hamas Movement held contacts with Western states to follow up on the deportations and the issue of terrorism. We held contacts with several West European ambassadors. We asked for a meeting with the U.S. ambassador, who said that he would ask the diplomat to meet us. We replied by saying that we wanted to meet with the ambassador himself.

Then, the Hamas Movement refused to meet with a diplomat below the level of ambassador. So, we halted the dialogue with the Americans. One week or 10 days later, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department said that the Americans had halted the dialogue with us. Since then, you know how the events have unfolded. They have added Hamas to the list of terrorist organizations. Instigation against Hamas has begun at the urging of the Zionists. This is the story of our contacts with the Americans. We do not have any objection to talks with anybody except the Zionist enemy.

[Al-Rantawi] Once again, have there been recent or current contacts with the U.S. Administration?

[Ghawshah] No. Nonetheless, we have had contacts with Western states.

[Al-Rantawi] Sir, Hamas says that it is high time President 'Arafat searched his soul and reconsidered his options. Is Yasir 'Arafat required to leave Gaza and announce the failure of the Palestinian National Authority's experiment there?

[Ghawshah] 'Arafat must shoulder his responsibilities toward the whole Palestinian people, toward their future, and toward history. At a specific point in time, he led the Palestinian people and the PLO. Well, he has put all his weight behind the Oslo deal. He believed that this agreement would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. He also believed that the accord would ensure the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons.

At present, 'Arafat has reached different convictions. In the course of this soul searching, he must reconsider the options he has embraced. That is why we have asked him to resign of his own volition so he may find comfort. I believe that many world leaders have resigned when they realized that they made mistakes. Charles de Gaulle resigned when he discovered that he did not enjoy the unanimous support of the French people. Siwar al-Dhahab led a coup in Sudan, but later resigned. Some prime ministers resign when they fail to implement their policy programs.

We believe that the Palestinian people have no future as long as Yasir 'Arafat is in power. There are two reasons for this: First, 'Arafat's political line has destroyed the Palestinian people. Second, 'Arafat's mind-set and tyrannical approach do not leave room for any sincere Palestinian to contribute toward the building of the homeland. The entire Palestinian people seek to build the homeland, but they are being denied the chance to do so.

We, the Hamas Movement, are more than anxious to avoid any Palestinian friction or infighting, God forbid. This is what Rabin wants. When they [Israelis] abandoned Gaza, they believed that it would be set on fire. They wagered on infighting, after which they could return to Gaza.

As for the West Bank, it is obvious now that they are not ready to give up an inch of land; the Palestinians are offered nothing more than self-rule.

Nine months have passed now and, God be praised, no major Palestinian infighting took place. Tragedies did take place, such as the Filastin Mosque massacre, but the Palestinians, God be praised, are still strong. We want to maintain this strength and to restore trust to the Palestinian people. This would be through enabling them to choose their leadership through genuine democratic and shura methods in order to overcome the current difficult stage. We say that by so doing, the world's respect for us will grow and our influence will become greater. Then, the reality of the Zionist entity will be exposed.

Who said that the Palestinian people have agreed to let their future be painted by one person? The Palestinians are resourceful and intelligent people. They have participated in building many Arab countries. They can build their own homeland easily, but they need the appropriate atmosphere.

Now if 'Arafat or any one of us fails to resolve the Palestine question in his lifetime, would it be permissible to confiscate our children's future? The future must remain open. If we cannot liberate Palestine now, let us open the way for liberation. The next generations will expand this way.

[Al-Rantawi] My dear brother: You actually have not answered my question. My question is specific. It concerns the next practical step that President 'Arafat is required to take. Is he required to declare the failure of the Oslo agreement and leave Gaza to open the way for the return of the Israeli Army to occupy it once again?

[Ghawshah] You are asking a question and answering it. Who says if 'Arafat leaves the Palestinian people...

[Al-Rantawi, interrupting] I did not say if he leaves the Palestinian people, I said if he abandons the Oslo agreement and Gaza?

[Ghawshah] My brother, first, the Jews are still in the Gaza Strip. They are now in control of more than one-third of the Gaza Strip. Regrettably, they exist inside

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the Palestinian Authority. Probably the Wachsman incident proved to everyone how one of the agents sent to Rabin was the same one who stormed the place where Wachsman was held. That agent himself was from the Palestinian Authority.

You are saying that the Israeli Army will return to Gaza. Let it return to Gaza. The Palestinian people are lying in wait. I believe that the Jews will count to 10 before taking such a step. They were so anxious to leave the nest of wasps.

It is not easy for them to take such a step. But, generally speaking, it is not impossible. Yet, it should be noted that they are still in Gaza up to this day.

Gaza has not been liberated. This is the basic difference between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, we said that we cannot stop operations in the Gaza Strip because it has not been liberated yet. When it is liberated, then the PA can ask us to stop our operations here.

Hamas Shaykh Bahr on Ties With PA, Gaza Situation

95AA0078A London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Jan 95 pp 15-16

[Interview with Hamas Shaykh Ahmad Bahr by unidentified correspondent in the Gaza Strip; date not given: "The Palestinian Authority Is Responsible For the Gaza Massacre; The Problem Is Between The People and the Authority, Not Between Hamas and Fatah"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Ahmad Bahr is one of the most prominent figures of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the Gaza Strip. He witnessed the 18 November massacre at the Palestine mosque, where he was the Friday speaker.

FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH conducted this interview with Shaykh Bahr to learn the latest developments of the situation in the Strip, as well as the relationship between Hamas and the [Palestinian] Authority [PA].

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] What was the reaction of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to the Authority's attempts to blame Hamas for what happened at the Palestine mosque in Gaza on Friday, 18 November, and its refusal to admit responsibility?

[Bahr] The bloody events at the Palestine mosque on 18 November 1994 were unimaginable, especially when the Palestinian police began firing heavily on the worshippers before the second greeting ended. No one could have imagined that bullets would be fired on Palestinians from 500 guns. May they reap the harvest. The greater calamity came when the police fired on unarmed citizens at the al-Shifa' hospital, one of whom was visiting his mother in the hospital and another had come to donate blood to his wounded brothers.

Yes, 13 martyrs fell and more than 200 Palestinians were wounded.

It is strange that the PA would claim that Hamas is responsible for the massacre. This is rejected by the Palestinians who saw with their own eyes the Palestinian police firing on unarmed worshippers.... It is rejected because thousands of worshippers in the Palestine mosque were witnesses to this massacre, which was started by the Palestinian police. Ask the foreign and local press who recorded videotapes that prove to the world that it was the Palestinian police who initiated the massacre. Ask the three Reuters journalists why the Palestinian police fired on them....

Hamas still insists that the PA bears complete responsibility for that Friday's events, because its police were the ones who opened fire and the Authority is responsible for security. It is not shameful for them to admit this, so that steps can be taken to punish the criminals who planned, gave the orders, and fired on the worshippers that Friday at the Palestine mosque.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] In your opinion, what has changed in the Gaza strip since the Palestinian police entered it, and how does the average Palestinian view the new situation?

[Bahr] The change is for the worse in all aspects. On the economic level, the Israelis still control the daily bread of a million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the spread of unemployment and price increases. On the security level, the greatest concern of Palestinian security is to protect the settlements. On the political level, the PA has given up on Jerusalem and acquiesced to the existence of the settlements. It has tossed 4 million Palestinian refugees into the chasms of oblivion, with 7,000 detainees remaining in the occupation's jails.

Democracy is held hostage to factionalism and party cliquishness. It has not been so long since the local newspapers were banned because they did not abide by the democracy of the Authority, which estimated the number of people attending the 26 November 1994 memorial service for 'Imad 'Aqal at 5,000 Hamas members. The newspapers did the forbidden when they estimated the Hamas attendance at 70,000.

The average Palestinian considers the Oslo Agreement dangerous. This danger has escalated more than six months after the effective date of the self-rule agreement, which did not fulfill even the most minor demands of the Palestinian people, but brought instead poverty, hunger, and bloodshed.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] Some attribute the increased scope of the opposition, especially the Islamists, to the deteriorating economic situation and the donor nations' failure to support the PA. What do you think?

[Bahr] Our daily life among the Palestinian people indicates that the opposition's numbers are increasing

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day after day and that the PA is isolated and beleaguered as a result of its faulty practices, such as the groundless mass arrests, opposition to freedoms, capricious appointments, spreading unemployment, and rising prices.

If the Rabin government is plotting to attack the opposition through the embargo and an economic and financial squeeze, this confirms that the roots of the problem lie in the Oslo and Cairo Agreements, which jettisoned the Palestinian people's rights and destroyed the Palestinian identity to make Israel the master to be obeyed.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] Much has been said about the contacts between your people and the Authority both before and after the massacre. What is the latest on these contacts? Do you think that they can produce a result?

[Bahr] The Hamas movement welcomes a constructive dialogue that would serve the Palestinian people, preserve its unity and security, and spare it from further bloodshed. On this basis Hamas agreed to a dialogue with the Authority prior to and after the massacre to facilitate some vital issues, solve problems, and eliminate the civil strife. After the massacre, the Hamas movement placed full responsibility for that Friday's events on the PA, but the Authority refused to accept this responsibility. Therefore, the commendable mediation committee, made up of brethren who were inside the 1948 "Green Line," intervened, and Hamas and the Authority agreed to cool things down and put an end to the risks of the tension that has created an atmosphere that enables agents and intriguers to damage this people's unity. The mediation committee continued its work to narrow the differences between the Authority and Hamas; however, we were taken by surprise when the Authority wanted to convert the problem into one between Fatah and Hamas. Hamas emphatically rejects this because the Authority is responsible for that Friday's events. The police who fired on the worshippers were from the Authority, not Fatah. Thus there is no problem between Hamas and Fatah; instead, it is between the Authority and the people. If the Authority insists on its position that the problem is between Hamas and Fatah, it is the one responsible for interrupting the dialogue.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] What is your comment about 'Arafat's mobilizing the Fatah movement to confront the opposition? Do you think that there is internal opposition within Fatah or do they all support the Authority?

[Bahr] After six months of self-rule, 'Arafat became aware of a noticeable loss of popularity. He wanted to demonstrate his strength, so he summoned the Fatah organization, the Shabibah, and the Hawks to stand by his side after he had previously marginalized many of them. Members of Fatah hurried to support President 'Arafat in order to gain some authority. They mobilized their armies and went out in an armed demonstration through the streets of the Strip. They chanted against Islamic movement figures and wrote slogans against them on the walls of Gaza. This was done in order to brandish the big stick at the opposition, especially Hamas.

Yes, 'Arafat descended from the stature of president of the people to the level of the Fatah organization in a manner described by many politicians and analysts as ludicrous.

There is no doubt that there are sincere people among Fatah's members who oppose the peace process and who had honorable positions regarding that Friday's events in preventing their people from firing on citizens. They issued a statement of condemnation, blaming the PA for the massacre. The statement ended with the words "Fatah 65."

So opposition exists, especially among the sincere and honorable members of Fatah, who are displeased with the Authority's performance and practices.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] Some of the Authority's men call for disarming the opposition, especially the ['Izz al-Din] al-Qassam Brigades, to ensure the Authority's control over the situation. What do you think of this demand, and what is your position on continuing the resistance?

[Bahr] As long as there is an occupation and settlements, it will be the people's right to fight with all available means, including armed struggle, until the occupation is defeated. Therefore, the opposition, with Hamas in the lead, has a legitimate right to resist the occupation to restore the stolen rights of the Palestinian people. We cannot renounce this strategy because the jihad will continue until resurrection day.

As for disarming the Brigades, there is no justification for it. It should be the sinners and agents who are disarmed. The rampant spread of weapons in the Strip's streets and camps should be eliminated because it provokes and intimidates people, and even kills some of them. Why should the Authority allow the Fatah elements to bear arms when it wants to prevent the opposition from doing so?

The Authority is incapable of providing true protection for the Palestinian people. It also knows that the Brigade's weapons are the ones that expelled the occupier. It knows that the Brigade's operations were one of its pressure cards. So the Authority should respect, appreciate, and hold sacred the Brigade's weapons, instead of confiscating them.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] The Zionist leadership warns that it will be forced to return to Gaza to attack Hamas, its leadership, and its prominent personalities. What do you think of this threat?

[Bahr] It is not unusual for the Zionist leadership to enter Gaza to strike at Hamas and assassinate its leaders. The martyring of Hani 'Abid is not far from us. The

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well-known history of Zionism is filled with assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings in Beirut, Tunis, etc. These threats indicate that the Rabin government fears the specter of al-Qassam and so it wants to intimidate Hamas to make it stop its jihad.

Even more than this, it intends its threats to incite 'Arafat to crack down on the Islamic movement.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] What is your view of the level of coordination between your people and the jihad movement, as well as the other opposition forces and the independent nationalist figures?

[Bahr] There are meetings and dialogues going on at all levels about the jihad. They are brothers who share with us the same concern. Our objective is the same. We hope that the relationship will develop into a united Islamic front capable of confronting the challenges.

As for the other opposition forces, despite their differing ideas and programs, there is a shared factor that unites us: opposition to the Oslo Agreement. Meetings have taken place; we hope there will be more.

Yes, there are independent nationalist figures who bear the Palestinian burden. What they have to say is being heard. They are not happy with the Oslo Agreement or the Authority's performance. We will meet with them in a constructive dialogue for the betterment of society.

[FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH] What formula do you think best for resolving the continuing conflict between your people and the Authority to avoid the civil strife that Zionism is trying to incite in the Strip?

[Bahr] There must be a call for a dialogue conference that will bring together the Authority and all the popular, Islamic, nationalist, and independent forces to arrive at a formula for mutual understanding between the Authority and the opposition through a brotherly dialogue concerned about the nation's best interests.

Out of this conference, an emergency committee should be formed from among all the Palestinian leaders, to be agreed upon by everyone, for the purpose of containing any problem that might arise. It should have all necessary authority and its decisions should be binding on everyone.

Islamist Mayor on PA-Hamas Reconciliation

95AA0078B London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic Jan 95 pp 17-18

[Interview of Umm al-Fahm Mayor Shaykh Ra'ed Salah by Muhammad 'Adel 'Aqal, in Amman; date not given: "The Truth About What the Committee For Reconciliation Between the Authority and Hamas Has Done"—first two paragraphs are FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic movements played a prominent role inside the Green Line in occupied Palestine in 1948. Now the name of Shaykh Ra'ed Salah, mayor of Umm al-Fahm, has emerged as a member of the committee seeking a reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH met with Shaykh Salah in Amman after he had performed the minor pilgrimage. He revealed the challenges faced by the Islamic movement and its mediation role.

['Aqal] We would like to hear about your role in reconciling the PA and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) after the recent events in Gaza.

[Salah] Yes, our role in the recent events complemented the original role that we have played on more than one occasion, as our original concept was that it was necessary to stop the bloodshed and stop the killing as soon as possible. For that reason, since the beginning of the incident, we have been making contacts. Within a few hours, some of us were inside the Strip; another group followed the day after the incident. There was a meeting with the PA and a private one with Yasir 'Arafat, as Mr. 'Arafat came to us asking us to work to stop this painful incident. I recall that he made it clear that he was authorizing us to do whatever we thought necessary. Based on this, we also met with the Islamic movement, which emphasized one thing about the bloody events of that tragic Friday, which was that it was not—as some of the media portrayed it—between the PA and the Hamas movement, but between the PA and the worshippers massed inside the mosque. It then turned into being between the PA and all the Strip's inhabitants, whether in the hospital or in some other neighborhoods, such as al-Shaja'iyah, al-Shaykh Ridwan, and other occupied areas. Despite this, they emphasized, their role was and would always remain one of trying to spare the Palestinian people's blood and avoiding civil strife or civil war, God forbid. The day would not come when they would point their weapons at Palestinians; rather, they will always try to hold on to their weapons and aim them at the occupier, as long as he remains an occupier. Therefore, they told us that they were prepared to work as part of this Palestinian people to stop this bloody massacre and to get past it to a peaceful situation for all of the Palestinian people. Following this, and after we heard from a number of prominent people and tried to put an end to what happened on that bloody Friday, the committee drafted a statement with several points, including a call to form a fact-finding committee composed of representatives from all sides. In the beginning of the statement, we emphasized the basic point of it, as follows: The PA bears responsibility for what happened by virtue of its position and its responsibility for the people's security until such time as the investigating committee's conclusions appear. The day we finished the statement, with its detailed points, we went to Yasir 'Arafat and read him its text. However, he opposed the

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first item, and a long debate ensued about this item. He continued to insist on his opposition, so we halted publication of the statement. Unfortunately, the day after the discussion, I was startled while flipping through the AL-QUDS newspaper to find that it had written an article under the title "Draft Agreement," in which it published the first item in other than the spirit in which the reconciliation committee agreed upon it. In this article the newspaper even wrote that the Hamas movement was the one that opposed the first item. I found this to be baseless, so I took the initiative and sent a facsimile to AL-QUDS to inform it of its error and the true content of the first item. I emphasized that the PA was the one that opposed it, not the Hamas movement, and I asked them to issue a correction, in keeping with the freedom of the press. After this, the committee continued its praiseworthy efforts, and I personally began my trip to perform the minor pilgrimage with some of our relatives from Umm al-Fahm.

['Aqal] What about the mediation through your meetings with 'Arafat and the Authority and through the pressure being exerted on the PA by Israel and America? Do you feel that there is any seriousness or true hope for some kind of national response? If we were to put 'Arafat's staying power on one side of a scale, and on the other side the nationalist dimension of the national requirements that you presented and that are the efforts of the committee and the best interests of the Palestinian people, to which side would 'Arafat lean: the side of the pressures and his own interests or to the side of the Palestinian people and the nationalist effort being exerted?

[Salah] In my opinion, all the Palestinian people must clearly agree on one thing: the strength of this people is a strength that will hold it together. It will not draw strength from any other source. Thus it must be clear to Yasir 'Arafat or the PA that its strength will not be drawn on any particular day from the strength of any party foreign to the Palestinian people, but its strength will always and forever lie in the Palestinian people's living out, in solidarity, all the tenets of the civilized society that respects freedom of opinion and freedom of expression of opinion through all available means, free of political coercion and coercion in its various daily transactions. For this reason, I hope that the mediation committee succeeds in converting these concepts into reality soon, God willing, into ways of life agreed upon by all.

['Aqal] The Authority is blaming Hamas for the incident. What is your comment on this?

[Salah] In my opinion, this is very far from the truth of what happened that bloody Friday to our people in the Strip. Everyone knows the basic truth of what happened; therefore, I hope that the opportunity will be given to a committee to determine the facts objectively and to investigate all the events, from the killing of some worshippers immediately after the Friday prayer to the spilling over of these events into the al-Shifa' hospital and other areas. I think that it is necessary for the fact-finding committee's conclusions to be public and candid, because who was responsible and how the incidents occurred are important questions whose answers should not be secret. Every Palestinian everywhere should know the bitterness of what happened so as to learn from the experience.... What is needed now and in the future?

['Aqal] How do you view the Authority's future in light of the increasing gravity of recent events?

[Salah] I say frankly that the PA must prove itself in deeds through its day-to-day treatment of the Palestinian masses, especially in the Strip. When it stated several times in defining its role that it did not come to perform the role of Lahad that was prescribed for it in Lebanon, this statement should be known by everyone and should be evident from its deeds. This requires that the Authority not deal with events as if it were being accused in the eyes of America, Israel, or the West, but as if it came first and last to do its duty with regard to its Palestinian people, with the principles essential for the civilized progress desired by all Palestinians everywhere in the world.

['Aqal] Do you believe that the foundations exist that will enable the Authority to be successful?

[Salah] So far it is obvious that there are many difficulties, even almost whirlwind crises, and the PA will not succeed in transcending these crises unless it finds support, first and foremost, from the Palestinian people, not from other regimes. There are many hurdles, from the events of daily life to long-range political aspirations, which makes one cautious and extremely concerned that these obstacles will form an impenetrable, high wall. Let me give a practical example. The Strip's infrastructure is still lacking. This is one of the simplest requirements. There is still a lack of self-employment opportunities for the Palestinian living in the Strip, which makes daily life still dependent on Israeli industry, leaving it open to Israeli sanctions affecting people's daily bread. Even some of the utilities used in daily life are still linked to Israeli companies, such as water, electricity, and telephone. As for some of the aspects of long-range political aspirations, there are many hurdles here as well, unfortunately. The subject of sovereignty is a murky subject that is still remote and not being discussed. The subject of Jerusalem is likewise not being talked about, while the subject of the future of the 4 million Palestinian refugees and whether it will be possible for them to be given the right of return or not is also still a remote issue. The subject of the Palestinian men and women who remain in prison, in particular Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, is still not settled. There is a lot of talk about it, but so far without any result satisfactory to any Palestinian mother. In my opinion, while I don't say that these examples represent all the obstacles, they represent some obstacles, all of which make a long, solid wall that cannot be hurdled except with God's help, and then by treating the Palestinian people as the first and final source of authority for successful Palestinian progress.

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['Aqal] Some analysts believe that what the Palestinian police walked into was the result of a plot and a scenario prepared for them, and that this difficult situation is the final stage facing this Authority. In this view, there will be excuses for the Jews or Israel to take other action to abort the so-called peace process in their own special way, control self-rule forever, keep the Israeli umbrella dominant, and keep the occupation in another form and under different terminology!

[Salah] This is a comment I have made frankly, even in the media. The day we were asked about this matter I said: I personally as a Muslim consider that peace, as a term with true meaning, is one of the bases of Islam. However, the things that are happening today on the Palestinian scene or on a wider stage make the Muslim stand back, very wary of what is happening and what might be called a peace initiative in the region, due to the existence of loopholes bearing the seeds of failure for this initiative at some point. We do not know the future, nor will we try to predict it, but historical logic and the hopes of the Palestinian people are not at all in harmony with what is happening now. Therefore, I say again that what we fear is that these loopholes that I mentioned in my response to a previous question will have been turned forever into a new initiative that gives a new definition and a new solution for the Palestinian problem that is not far from what we see today.

['Aqal] With regard to the collaborators who were expelled during the years of the Palestinian intifadah, which is entering its eighth year, the news media has brought this subject up frequently. The Zionist Police Minister, Moshe Shahal, said in a statement that the media has inflated this issue and that their numbers are smaller than has been claimed. What is your comment?

[Salah] With bitterness and regret, I say that the numbers are in the thousands. We had hoped that the numbers would be small, but the truth clearly is that the numbers are huge. Unfortunately, they have had a negative effect, from the time they permitted themselves to take on this role while in their various birthplaces to the time when they were permitted to move to various areas inside the Green Line. Perhaps the experience of this disreputable group of people is clear proof that the righteous man progresses through consecration to the service of God, the only guarantee of man's happiness in the two worlds. Otherwise, if this consecration to God, the Master of the two worlds, falters, in this notorious group it is a warning to whoever is considered among the people of earth. Even if they all come together with all their potential, man will not be free from want and there will never be a substitute for God's mercy on him. Therefore, what I say about events that have personally affected me or in which I have had a role in trying to eliminate their effects...these people live a life—if we can truthfully call it a life—of distress and hardship day and night. There is nothing harder than for man to live or sleep with the feelings of being rejected by all. There is nothing harder than feeling that he is rejected without finding a refuge to protect him. Even the refuge that he thinks is a refuge also rejects him, his life, his future and his family's future. For this reason, we, as heads of local Arab authorities within the Green Line, had a meeting about this subject. It was agreed to adopt a clear solution, whether it was in harmony with the minister's position or not. Therefore, I hope that this matter will be an exception in our people's history. I pray God that it will be the last time ever and that it will not be repeated in any future stage, God willing.

['Aqal] Rabin has proclaimed war against Hamas inside Palestine and abroad. There is now an international war against Hamas, that is, against the Islamic movement. It has tried to move the battle to more than one Arab country. What is it that afflicted the Islamic movement in Palestine in 1948 from this war, and are there measures being taken against you or is there democracy among you?!

[Salah] There are some old practices and there are some new practices. There are hints of taking other measures. This is against all Muslims through its coverage of them in this statement: fighting Islamic extremism. I will give an example of this. They say, "The Islamic movement is fighting worldwide because it is a terrorist, uncivilized movement." I ask a simple question: Is the conversion of more than 70 mosques inside the Green Line into unsanctified places, such as restaurants, bars, or cattle pens, civilized or barbaric?! Who is it then who is against civilized values? This is one of the practices that has been going on for a long time, and we continue to suffer from it. The sanctity of many of the things that are sacred to us as Muslims—I am not speaking only of the Islamic movement—is being violated day and night. Among the most important is the daily violation of the sanctity of the blessed al-Aqsa mosque, which has become an ordinary thing and unfortunately does not arouse much of the news media due to its daily and constant repetition. However, it is truly a flagrant violation of the sanctity of the blessed al-Aqsa mosque. I'll give another example. There is still an educational, university edifice being established in the city of Umm al-Fahm; it is the College of the Islamic Call and Islamic Sciences. We have received accreditation from the League of Islamic Universities for the Islamic Call College, and we have also received accreditation from the Council of Palestinian Education. The possibility of accreditation from the Union of Arab Universities is being studied. All of these parties have blessed the idea, including those who have provided accreditation and those who are studying it; however, the Israeli Ministry of Education still refuses to accredit this college. Bear in mind that it is a civilized phenomenon, and a sign of consciousness and culture for any person to want to enroll in it. In my opinion, it is one of the bases of civilization for us to encourage higher education, not to stand in the way of the educational mission. Are we the ones who are standing in the way of civilization?

I'll give another example. In all self-respecting parts of the world, there is a minimum level of religious tolerance

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and of freedom to practice religious rites. What does it mean when dozens of imams are dismissed and prevented from carrying out their duties in their mosques, even though all the worshippers want them, and imposed on the mosques and on the worshippers are Imams who do not have even the minimum qualifications for this important mission and this huge trust. These are some of the practices that we are still coming up against. There is also a spurious practice of sometimes adopting positions originally circulated by some Hebrew newspapers in order to attack the Islamic movement and stir people up against it. The question remains: What is the purpose behind these practices?

We try to draw a comparison for every thinking person between what we hear from some Israeli officials about how they want to have civilized relations with the Islamic world and the bitter truth of what they do.

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Algeria

Salvation Army's New Leader Termed 'Moderate'

MM1603151495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Kamal al-Tawil: "New Leader of 'Salvation Army' a 'Moderate,' Supports Negotiated Solution"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Algerian sources yesterday expressed their optimism regarding the appointment of Madani Merzak, "amir" of the "Islamic Salvation Army" for the eastern region, as national amir on behalf of Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] leaders. Acquaintants of the new leader of the "Salvation Army" have told AL-HAYAH that he is a moderate in his thinking and that he advocates resolving the crisis through dialogue.

The sources, some of which are from the FIS itself, said that Merzak, who is active in the FIS and 35 years of age, enjoys widespread respect in FIS circles.

The sources pointed to the importance of his "unanimous" selection as leader of the FIS's military arm. They believe that this indicates that all FIS tendencies are agreed on continuing the policy of moderation and seeking a solution to the crisis through negotiation, even if that leads to concessions but means that the country is spared a bloodbath

The sources believe that the military wing's assumption of power on the ground was a natural occurrence prompted by the measures taken against the the FIS's political wing, such as moving Abass Madani and Ali Belhadj to an unknown destination and preventing members of the Salvation Shura Council from pursuing political action. However, the sources pointed out that the military wing stressed in its statement its full respect for the FIS leaders.—which means that the "Salvation Army" has not turned against its political leadership. But it wanted to take control of the military situation in the field, especially after the threat of breakup emerged in view of the absence of a unified leadership to direct the situation politically.

The sources added that Merzak's appointment as "amir" of all Algerian territory means that for the first time the FIS's military now have one leadership, instead of leaderships (amirs) distributed in the regions (such as the eastern, western, and central regions, which are run by more than one amir).

The Salvation Army's statement did not say whether the central region is now unified under Merzak, or whether it has pledged allegiance to him.

One source said yesterday that some time ago Merzak sent a letter to President Liamine Zeroual in which he expressed his hope that the crisis would be resolved through dialogue. He addressed him as "the head of state." The same source said that Merzak emphasized this position at more than one meeting of the Salvation Army command. The Algerian presidency did not reveal the content of the letter.

This development at Salvation Army level comes amid positive signs as regards the position of the Armed Islamic Group, which yesterday dissociated itself (in a statement published by AL-HAYAH) from practices attributed to it by some bulletins published abroad. However, it does not mean that a change has occurred in the hard-line group's position vis-a-vis the way to resolve Algeria's crisis—a position which, of course, differs from the FIS position and the tendency calling for a negotiated solution, which includes the new leadership of the Salvation Army. [passage omitted].

FIS Leaders 'Not Consulted'

AU1703113995 Paris AFP in English 1100 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, March 17 (AFP)—The leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, were not consulted on the naming of an interim national amir, the Arabic-language daily AL-HAYAH said Friday [17 March].

An unnamed source in the fundamentalist movement said: "It is the first time that a leader of the FIS has been designated without the approval of the chouyouk"—referring to Madani and Belhadj.

The paper cited the source as saying that the armed wing of the Islamic movement, the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS) has promised to follow the political line set down by its traditional leaders.

The designation of Madani Merzak as "interim national amir" was not a coup by the armed wing against the political section, the source added.

"Madani Merzak is not going to monopolize the political leadership of the FIS," the source said, adding: "There is no split between the political and armed wings" of the movement.

The exact whereabouts of the FIS leaders is officially unknown since their transfer in February out a luxury state-paid apartment, the Djenane El Muphti, in Algiers.

Unconfirmed reports said the Imam Ali Belhadj, who is closest to the armed groups leading Algeria's civil war, was separated from Madani and transferred to a residence in the south of the country.

The FIS in Rome in January signed a "national contract" with the main opposition parties proposing the opening of negotiations with the authorities.

The more hardline Armed Islamic Group (GIA) has refused any negotiation.

'Conspiracy' Said Behind Serkadji Prison Riot

LD1603191695 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, minister of the interior and localities, today told the local

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press about the initial findings of the investigation into the recent attempted riot at Serkadji Prison. The interior minister said there was an inside and outside conspiracy. He pointed out, however, that the findings of the investigation will be handed to Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi on Sunday.

Cherif Gives Details of Inquiry

LD1703101295 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0630 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Officially set up on 2 March, the commission of inquiry into the escape attempt at Serkadji Prison, which turned into a revolt, has completed its investigations. Yesterday afternoon, in other words two weeks later, Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, chairman of this commission, disclosed the first details of the inquiry to the three national radio stations. Let us listen to the interior minister's words, recorded by Amel Labassi:

[Begin Cherif recording] We discovered—and it is now possible to state this—there was active collusion outside and inside the prison. Furthermore, we observed a form of dysfunction in the running of the prison, and we also found a certain number of anomalies, such as terrorist prisoners, sentenced to death or life imprisonment, living alongside common law prisoners. This, in a way, simplified the task of those who attempted to escape; they took a certain number of common law prisoners hostage, whom they then threatened to kill, and some of whom they did kill. We also found that 12 hours elapsed before intervention took place, as desired by the attorney general, who involved the security services, in order to give the prisoners time to see reason and return to their cells. These prisoners showed their stubbornness and determination to go as far as suicide, killing innocent people—as they cold-bloodedly cut the throats of four guards—and they put their demands into practice, in other words: Either you let us out or we will kill. At that point they killed nine hostages—common law prisoners, other prisoners, and guards. [end recording]

GIA, AIS Leaders Killed by Security Forces

LD1603163395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services announced yesterday that they killed 20 terrorists during search operations in various parts of the national territory. A large haul of arms, including in particular home-made bombs, was recovered in the last few days, and thanks to the work of the security forces on the ground, the GIA [Armed Islamic Group] lost several of its leaders including (Ahmed Zenini) alias El Hadj, the group's official responsible for external relations, who died of his injuries at Boufarik and had to be buried quietly. (Embarek Laboudi), the AIS [Islamic Salvation Army] leader in Taref wilaya, was also killed, as were the leader in Laghouat and the leader in Sidi Bel Abbes.

Several sources agree that the deaths of these heads of the Islamist groups would, to a certain extent, explain the terrorists' relentless action in resorting to bomb attacks and murdering women.

'Terrorist Group' Kills 2 Girls in Ain Ferhat

LD1603185395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement, the security forces have announced today that two young girls were found with their throats cut some 200 meters outside their home at Ain Ferhat in the province of Oum El Bouaghi. The two sisters, Soraya Ben Cherif, 17 years old, and Malika, 16 years old, both unemployed, had been kidnapped last night from their family home by a terrorist group; the security forces immediately launched a search operation.

Egypt

Al Gore's 19 Mar Visit Previewed

Cooperation Accord Anticipated

NC1703091395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 17 Mar (MENA)—U.S. Vice President Al Gore leaves for Cairo the day after tomorrow, Sunday [19 March], at the start of a tour of several countries in the Middle East.

U.S. sources in Washington said today that the U.S. vice president's three-day visit to Egypt is especially important. During the visit, preliminary steps are expected to be taken to implement the Mubarak-Gore initiative for economic and technological cooperation. Officials in both countries hope the initiative will lead to a qualitative transition in Egyptian-U.S. relations and open new horizons for cooperation and joint action.

The sources added that the measures to implement the initiative will include the formation of an economic committee made up of a number of senior Egyptian and American businessmen and investors.

Hopes are being pinned on this committee to expand the scope of economic cooperation and investments on well-prepared practical bases to establish new projects and create job opportunities in various parts of Egypt. The private sector is to assume a primary and effective role in this field.

Regarding technological cooperation between Egypt and the United States, the final signing of an agreement, which was initialed in Washington late last year, is expected to take place during Al Gore's visit to Egypt. The agreement aims at consolidating cooperation in scientific and technological areas. It is based on a definitive concept stipulated in the agreement that scientific and technological cooperation is a basic condition to

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achieve development in today's world. The agreement also aims to apply the most modern scientific and technological methods to develop work and production in agricultural and industrial spheres and improve the environment and other aspects that need to be developed in Egypt.

The agreement has laid the foundation to develop links between scientific research organizations in Egypt and the United States and to strengthen ties between scientists and researchers in both countries. To achieve this goal, the agreement seeks to organize contacts between organizations and scientists on permanent bases and to review the outcome of their joint action regularly to ascertain the use and effectiveness of such contacts.

The initiative was agreed upon last September between President Husni Mubarak and the U.S. vice president when the latter visited Cairo to take part in the conference on population and development.

NPT Not To Top Talks

NC1603170695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1545 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—MENA has learned that Egypt's position toward the signing of the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] will top President Husni Mubarak's talks with U.S. Vice President Al Gore. The talks will begin on Monday [20 March] morning.

The agency also learned that Mubarak will raise a number of important issues within the context of the political and economic cooperation between Egypt and the United States.

The U.S. vice president is due in Cairo on Sunday evening and will be met at the airport by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi. During the three-day visit, the two sides will sign the executive agreement concerning the partnership for economic development and progress. This partnership was announced by President Mubarak and the U.S. vice president on behalf of President Clinton during Al Gore's visit to Cairo in September 1994.

Mubarak-Gore Initiative Viewed

NC1703100995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0847 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Egyptian-U.S. relations are experiencing a significant qualitative transition with U.S. Vice President Al Gore's visit to Cairo on Sunday [19 March]. During the visit, the final signing of the Mubarak-Gore initiative for Egyptian-U.S. partnership will take place. The initiative will define the aspects of economic and technological cooperation between the two countries and will open a new path for cooperation between them.

The initiative and the current measures to implement it reflect the extent of the U.S. interest in Egypt's role in the Middle East and in developing the excellent ties with it. It also expresses U.S. support for the economic reform policy, which is being implemented very seriously.

This has been emphasized by the U.S. vice president, who praised Egypt's leading role in the Middle East and the important and decisive efforts carried out by President Mubarak to advance the peace process. He noted that Egypt and the United States led the peace process over 15 years and that, as it was a partner in the peace process, Egypt can also be a partner in progress and development.

The Mubarak-Gore initiative transforms Egyptian-U.S. economic relations from ties based on offering economic aid to Egypt to a more balanced relationship between the two countries based on trade and investment.

The initiative establishes a new mechanism to provide Egypt with technological aid in science and knowledge and to help it implement its economic program. [passage omitted]

Reasons Cited for 'Hardline Position' on Treaty

NC1603173195 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 28

[Report by Fayzah Sa'd]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At Wednesday's [8 March] meeting in Cairo between the Egyptian foreign minister and the U.S. secretary of state, 'Amr Musa stressed to Warren Christopher that Egypt will not sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty when it comes up for renewal unless Israel does.

A few hours before the arrival of the U.S. secretary, a responsible diplomatic source told me that Cairo gave Tel Aviv three options to solve the dispute between the two countries over the Treaty's renewal, scheduled for 17 April. The three proposals are:

1. That both Egypt and Israel sign on the scheduled date for renewal.

2. That Israel set a period of time—it could be 10 years—that it considers to be enough, after which it will sign the Treaty.

3. That Israel determines now a specific date on which to join the Treaty. This joining will be binding on Israel even if it fails to sign the Treaty.

The responsible diplomatic source said the problem lies not in the validity or invalidity of the Treaty, but in the confusion surrounding Israel's position. [passage omitted]

But why is Cairo now hardening its position concerning the need for Israel to sign the Treaty?

The responsible diplomatic source replied: "For two reasons: First, the announcement by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin that Israel is prepared to wage an

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all-out war in the medium and long-term, which means the use of nuclear weapons. Second, the demand made by Tel Aviv to the U.S. State Department to impose economic sanctions against Egypt to force it to change its hardline position. [no closing quotation marks as published]

Israel has a very advanced nuclear program, although it has not yet admitted it.

Editorial Says Egypt Can Do Without U.S. Aid

NC1703060195 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 10 Mar 95 p 1

[Editorial: "The people's dignity is above any aid"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems that America is determined to win the antipathy of the Egyptian people, as well as all Arabs. It certainly no longer represents the "fair friend" who always sides with the truth. It is constantly taking Israel's side, whether Israel is right or deadly wrong.

It is now touching a sensitive spot in its relations with Egypt, threatening to use the economic aid card against it if it fails to meet the desires of the American master. This is not the first time such threats have been made; they have been whispered and spoken openly so many times that Egypt's dignity has become no more than a morsel in everybody's mouth, as though the Egyptian people are begging for food without success.

America is very wrong if it thinks for a moment that it can exert as much pressure as it wants or threaten forever to cut aid.

Despite everything, the Egyptian people refuse to beg for a loaf of bread stained with humiliation or bearing traces of boastful charity.

We can tell America that it stands to gain more than Egypt from its continued aid. America knows very well that Egypt is the security valve in the region. The key to regional stability is in Egypt's hands not any one else's. If Egypt accepts aid, it is for the sake of the everlasting peace it is pursuing and not to please America.

America should always remember that Egypt has lived for years without asking anything of America or any other state and that the Egyptian people are capable of tightening their belts to prevent America from "boasting of charity." We say this because America knows how forbearing our people are and how capable they are of living without aid.

Will America understand the lesson, or will it continue to ignore the power of the Egyptian people and their angry defense of their dignity?

U.S. Reaction to Islamic Group Threat Viewed

NC1703095895 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 13 Mar 95 pp 12-15

[Report by Wa'il al-Abrashi and Karim Subhi—punctuation as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In an attempt to disavow their clear and intimate relationship with the United States, the extremists shyly wrote a few lines in a leaflet they issued on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, in which they claimed to be threatening the United States!

For its part, the United States—now that the smell of its dealing with the extremists has strongly emanated—is trying to disavow them and disclaim its support.

Where is the truth?!

The following report offers part of the answer.

Two days before 'Id al-Fitr, the security services arrested two Muslim Brotherhood members who were in possession of maps, information, and intelligence about Americans working in Egypt. Total secrecy was imposed on the details of the incident, which was the first of its kind, especially since the dialogue between the American Embassy in Cairo and the Muslim Brotherhood is public and continuing. The visit to the United States by a number of Muslim Brotherhood leaders three months ago worried the Egyptian authorities, who asked the U.S. Embassy in Cairo—according to its sources—for information about the American Muslim Students Society, a small group that organizes huge, annual international conferences for the Muslim Brotherhood. Leaders of other Islamic movements in the Arab world are invited to these conferences and huge amounts of money are spent on them.

On the first day of 'Id al-Fitr, the Islamic Group issued a statement containing the first threat of its kind against the United States and American interests in Egypt. All statements issued by the extremist group over the past years were generally directed against foreigners, investors, or tourists; the Americans were never singled out. Those statements called on foreigners "to leave Egypt because the upcoming battle is vicious" or "to settle their financial situations in the usury banks before two weeks," for example.

Foreigners of various nationalities were hurt in terrorist operations against tourists, but not a single American.

Note: Like the Americans, the Israelis were also not hurt by the extremist groups; they were not targeted by any attack.

The latest advisory issued by the U.S. State Department to Americans travelling to Egypt admitted that their lives are not in danger and that American citizens in Egypt are not threatened by the extremist groups, although the advisory also admitted that foreigners and tourists in Egypt are targeted by extremist attacks. [passage omitted]

But the 'Id al-Fitr leaflet was totally different from the expectations of the State Department's travel advisory. It read verbatim: "The weak have no place on the face of the earth today. The law of the jungle, which the United States imposed today under the disguise of the so-called

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new world order, will not be restrained by the pretentious respect of international rules and laws. The Islamic Group in Egypt stresses that American arrogance in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and Libya, and against Islam's symbols and ulema (!!) can be stopped only at the hands of the mujahidin (!!) who desire martyrdom for the love of God, the same as the Americans' love of life. It is high time for the United States to realize that the confrontation with Islam and its symbols is beyond its capacity."

Despite the tough tone of the statement, which is completely different from previous statements, sources of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo tried to play it down. The sources gave a number of reasons and explanations for the failure to issue an official American statement reacting to the leaflet of the extremist group. These are as follows:

1. The statement was issued on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, not specifically to attack the United States. Statements issued on such occasions are usually full of rhetoric and they do not take the shape of practical positions, according to the classification of the U.S. Embassy and its analysis of the statements of the extremist groups.

2. The evidence of this, according to the U.S. Embassy sources, is that the statement speaks generally about the conditions of Muslims worldwide: in Egypt, Algeria, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, criticizing the policies of the United States and the new world order toward these countries in general. It does not threaten to attack Americans or American interests in Egypt, as the case was with previous statements that explicitly threatened tourists and foreigners without criticizing the policies of their countries.

This means that the statement is directed against the American policy toward many countries, not against the Americans. It talks about general issues, for example, that "the siege against the al-Aqsa mosque; the killing of Muslims in Chechnya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine, Lebanon, and Kashmir; and the military trials and physical liquidations in Egypt and Algeria cannot be stopped except by a state based on Islam," as the statement said.

3. As it speaks about Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, who is currently being tried in the United States, the statement also speaks about Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, leader of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Shaykhs Abbasi Madani and Ali Belhadj, leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria. It does not mention 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman's trial or demand his release.

The same sources disclosed that the U.S. Embassy in Cairo did not ask the Americans in Egypt, which number 12,000, to take any new measures to protect themselves after the Islamic Group statement, saying that the current measures are enough. [passage omitted]

Despite the justifications given by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo to play down the 'Id al-Fitr statement, the most worrying thing for it was the reference at the beginning of the statement to the NATO call to confront the danger of Islamic extremism. This can be seen as the reason for the sudden basic change in the relationship between the United States and the extremist groups and for the use of tough language, for the first time, against the United States in the statements of the extremist Islamic Group. [passage omitted]

The first swift reaction, reflecting a U.S. sense of such a change, came from Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the U.S Senate's Foreign Relations Committee and the man who attacked Egypt's strong ties with Libya and hinted that the aid to Egypt may be cut off because of these ties. In a television statement three days after the issuance of the Islamic Group's leaflet, he called for helping Egypt to achieve security and stability. He noted Egypt's efforts to combat extremism and called for maintaining U.S. aid to Egypt because, as he said, if extremism prevails, it will negatively affect the United States.

Helms' reaction is also considered a sudden change, especially since he strongly opposes U.S. foreign aid and he participated in the campaign against Egypt.

There are other reasons for the sudden change in the tone of the extremist Islamic Group toward the United States, notably the current trial of the group's mufti, Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, and a group of his followers for plotting to bomb important U.S. facilities, and also U.S. President Bill Clinton's decision to freeze assets, deposits, and property of terrorist organizations and figures. The Islamic Group's statement was preceded by threats from 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman inside the United States itself. [passage omitted]

Does the Islamic group's statement on the eve of 'Id al-Fitr mark the beginning of the sudden turnabout and the expected escalation between the two sides?

And does Senator Helms' reaction, in which he called for maintaining aid to Egypt because it is fighting extremism in the region, represent a reversal of the U.S. position toward extremism, especially since it came only three days after the Islamic Group's statement against the United States?

Musa Discusses Peace Problems, Nuclear Treaty

NC1603112095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0820 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tokyo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has highlighted that the peace process is now in danger because the frozen efforts on the Palestinian track, the absence of progress on the Syrian track, and the total absence of progress on the Lebanese track do not bode well. In a statement to the chief editors of the Egyptian newspapers at the end of President Husni Mubarak's visit to Japan, he said the peace process can still be saved, noting that this is the focus of the contacts Egypt is holding with Israel, the United States, and the various parties concerned. Musa

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stressed that the world will not accept that the peace steps on the Palestinian track end with Gaza and Jericho.

Musa pointed out that the Syrians realize the dimensions of the Egyptian stance in support of Syria. He welcomed the recent positive statements from Israel, such as a statement by Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, which began to mention making concessions. Musa noted that the land-for-peace principle cannot be given up, stressing that no party can be put to the test, because if this principle is accepted, then all the parties will be put to the test.

Musa emphasized that Egypt will not agree to an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as long as Israel does not comply with it. He noted that in all his contacts and meetings with the Japanese officials, President Mubarak explained the situation the peace process is in and the effects of this crisis, stressing that it would have a direct negative effect on the whole peace process. He noted that the success of the peace process is linked with Israel's full compliance with all the agreements. He said that Egypt is putting a question mark over Israel's nuclear program and asked: How can we speak of a peace process when there is a danger a few km from the borders of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Syria? He stressed that the Egyptian stance on the nuclear treaty goes back many years. In 1981 Egypt took a firm initiative at the United Nations on establishing a nuclear free zone in the Middle East. In 1990, during the Arab summit in Baghdad, President Mubarak issued a declaration for making the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. He noted that these stances focused only on the Israeli programs that deal with weapons of mass destruction. He noted that in January 1993, Egypt declared its boycott of the nuclear treaty as long as Israel refuses to sign it, because Egypt fears the danger of these undeclared programs, which are not subject to international supervision.

Musa said that Egypt pointed out to Israel that it is not looking for new opportunities for confrontation, but that the issue is more serious. If Israel is seeking a new regional order, we must discuss every aspect of the regional security that concerns this region and its security.

'Amr Musa said it is not fair for us to have to live under the threat of a military nuclear program on the borders of Egypt. He said that Israel's pretexts regarding fears of the possible Iraqi or Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons can be answered by saying that Iraq is under international supervision, while if Iran goes against the law, measures will be taken against it.

The foreign minister again confirmed that Egypt will not accept the indefinite extension of this Treaty in the case where the Israeli nuclear program is not open to international supervision. But there could be a short extension on condition that the time is dedicated to finding a regional order for the Middle East, one free of nuclear weapons.

He said this process surely creates worries for and raises questions by any person living in the Middle East. He clarified that Japan was concerned about the North Korean issue and its nuclear threats. In addition, any program that is outside international supervision could arouse the worries of the neighboring peoples.

He clarified that there are other countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa that do not accept the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

'Amr Musa affirmed in his statements to the chief editors of Egyptian newspapers that Egypt calls for establishing a future Middle East under fair circumstances and with natural peace; otherwise, peace will remain temporary.

Regarding Arab reconciliation, the foreign minister said the Alexandria summit contributed toward this. The opinion prevalent at that time was that the Arab League must be the framework for reconciliation. There are still some difficulties with many countries, but the important thing under the circumstances is that there is coordination in stances among the Arab countries at international forums to meet any dangers or threats, providing reconciliation efforts continue until they are realized.

'Amr Musa described President Husni Mubarak's visit to Japan as "an important and successful visit," not only from the perspective of strengthening direct relations between Egypt and Japan comprehensively, but also on the political, economic, cultural, and technological dimensions, which were manifested in what is called the joint communique: "Partners for the sake of peace."

He said that this visit asserted to the Japanese officials the vanguard role of Egypt and President Mubarak in the peace process and confirmed the principle of land for peace.

'Amr Musa said that during the visit they looked into ways to strengthen relations and draw out strategies in a comprehensive manner. He pointed out that the issuing of a final statement such as the one that was issued at the end of the Egyptian-Japanese talks is considered a rarity, which registers Japan's concern over setting up a framework for bilateral relations and over the presence of a comprehensive view regarding relations.

The foreign minister clarified that bilateral relations in the economic, trade, and investment fields will witness positive progress during the coming stage, after agreement was reached that the Japanese Government will review the system of insurance for medium and long-term trade deals. This insurance system has so far been restricted to short-range deals only.

'Amr Musa said that bilateral relations witness strong cooperation in the social development field in Egypt through standing symbols such as the opera and the pediatric hospital in Cairo, as well in aid for health services projects, water purification projects, and rehabilitating the dams along the Nile. There are issues the

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current talks addressed regarding agreements to offer youths chances for training in various sectors, primarily vocational qualification for youths.

The foreign minister added that Japan agreed to help Egypt prepare its export policies and propose the necessary solutions to boost exports. He pointed out that experts will be sent to prepare the necessary studies in this field to benefit from Japanese expertise in opening the international markets to Japanese exports on a very large scale.

'Amr Musa said that a new mechanism has been set up to overcome investment and trade problems in Egypt, by relying on Japanese experiments so that investors need not resort to tribunals and courts. This mechanism will be supervised by Minister 'Atif 'Ubayd, minister of the public business sector, within the framework of developing the investment process in Egypt.

Joint Naval Exercises With Israel Denied

NC1603162695 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 5

[Report by Fatimah Sayyid Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt has denied an Israeli announcement that it will be one of eight Arab countries holding joint naval exercises with Israel under Canadian supervision in the Mediterranean.

The Egyptian Defense Ministry stressed that there are no plans for any joint naval, ground, or air exercises with Israel.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry in mid-February noted the importance for the countries that suffer from terrorism to hold joint naval exercises with Israel. Israel views religious terrorism, especially in neighboring countries, as a threat to its national security.

Perry criticized NATO for not paying enough attention to security in the Mediterranean, after which NATO Secretary General Willy Claes began talks with five Mediterranean and North African countries.

Some military observers have linked Egypt's request to join the Arab Maghreb Union with the holding of joint exercises with Israel under NATO supervision. The observers say that the exercises in question are not the first of their kind between Israel and some Arab countries. Naval exercises have taken place between Israel and Arab countries linked with peace agreements. They took place on 30 and 31 July 1994, but were not made public.

Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has said the plan for joint naval exercises between Israel and some Arab countries threatens Libya's security and he warned against participating in such maneuvers.

Foreign Minister on New Economic Strategy

95LD0043A Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 17 Feb 95 pp 24-26

[Interview with Dr. Yusuf Butrus-Ghali, minister of state for international cooperation, by Majid 'Atiyah, in Cairo; date not given—first paragraph is AL-MUSAWWAR introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Will foreign aid to Egypt continue or will it be curtailed? What alternative or new formula is being discussed to deal with the United States on the economic level within the framework of the Mubarak-Al Gore initiative, which President Mubarak will discuss before his visit to Washington? What are the features of the new Egyptian strategy, which is being debated and which takes the international changes and the economic blocs into consideration? How is the dialogue with the IMF proceeding? Why has the Paris Club delayed its announcement on the cancellation of the third part of Egypt's debts? What are the World Bank's views on Egypt's economic reforms, particularly after Egypt had turned down some loans it offered? We have conducted the following interview with Dr. Yusuf Butrus-Ghali, minister of state for International Cooperation, before he left for Japan, accompanied by a group of Egyptian business leaders, to prepare for President Mubarak's visit to Tokyo:

['Atiyah] How do you view the future?

[Butrus-Ghali] The coming years pose a simple problem. It is a problem that does not only affect the United States or Egypt, but all the donor countries in the world. A few years ago a new trend appeared in the donor countries and in the developed countries to reduce their budget deficits. It appeared in Europe, both in the European Union as a whole, and in its member states separately. It also appeared in the United States and Canada, which are the most important donor countries. This trend has also begun appearing in Japan. Of course, when governments look for ways to reduce their budget deficits, they find difficulty in cutting domestic economic programs. They find it easier to cut foreign aid and foreign related expenses—in general, expenses that do not affect their citizens. This trend has appeared in France, Italy, and England. It appeared strongly in the United States after the Republican Party gained control of Congress.

We must understand from now that what we call official expenses—that is, government loans and grants—are being reduced. There is one exception to this rule, which is Japan. Last year Japan decided to increase its foreign aid budget from $50 billion to $75 billion over the next five years. However, Japan has specific objectives and a specific economic and geographical area in which it prefers to spend this aid money. This area is the Southeast Asian states and the members of the ASEAN Organization. What Japan spends outside this area is much lower than what it spends in it, although it increases this aid in relative proportion to the increase in the overall foreign aid budget.

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['Atiyah] What is the general trend, then?

[Butrus-Ghali] The trend is to reduce what is called government financial outflows to the Third World countries, in particular, including Egypt. The reduction will affect the aid given to Egypt. However, Egypt will perhaps be the last country to be affected by this reduction, because its standing in the world and because of President Mubarak's importance and respect in the international arena today.

['Atiyah] Has this trend started appearing in the financial outflows to the Third World?

[Butrus-Ghali] Yes. This trend began appearing since the end of the eighties. For example, official loans and grants—that is, loans and grants given by governments—used to represent 64 percent of the total long-term outflows to the Third World countries. It represented 17 percent in 1986. In 1994, the percentage of official loans and grants went down to about 36 percent of these outflows, and the percentage of direct investments and investments in securities in the Third World increased to approximately 40 percent of the overall outflows. This trend is affecting both the Third World and the donor industrial countries. It is designed to change the financial outflows from outflows that generate foreign debt in the Third World to outflows through which the industrial countries can contribute to development and investment in the Third World countries and not generate foreign debts for them.

We in Egypt are aware of this trend. The economic reform program has been designed primarily to correct the balance of payments' situation and restore economic balance, enabling Egypt totally to dispense with foreign loans within a few years, gradually adapt to the drop in foreign aid, and replace foreign loans with direct and financial investments in the Egyptian economy.

['Atiyah] Are we ready for this change in the methods of financing the Egyptian economy?

[Butrus-Ghali] Yes. We have laid down the economic basis and structural foundations for the Egyptian economy, which would help us make this change and adapt to it. For example, we have changed the structural and legal frameworks that govern the economy, enabling the Egyptian economy to attract direct and financial foreign investments. We have amended law No. 230 on investments and law No. 95 on the capital market to attract foreign investments in Egypt. We also have improved the various financial balances in the national economy, and now we have foreign currency reserves sufficient for about two years of imports to deal with any changes that might take place in financial inflows from abroad, which is a natural characteristic of these inflows.

['Atiyah] Let us return to our original question. What is the size of the grants and loans, and what type has been used in Egypt?

[Butrus-Ghali] Egypt has received about $1.8 billion in grants and loans in 1993/94, about 60 percent of which was in the form of grants, 27 percent in the form of easy loans, and 14 percent in the form of regular loans.

['Atiyah] We hear contradicting reports from Washington about U.S. foreign aid. The majority party in Congress is demanding a reduction and the U.S. Administration is insisting that there will be no reduction this year. What is the future of this aid?

[Butrus-Ghali] As I said, there is a trend in all the countries of the world, including the United States, to reduce the aid and official outflows to the Third World. This is basically due to domestic reasons in the donor countries and not in the recipient countries. The United States is no different from the other countries in this regard.

Regarding the contradictory statements by the U.S. Administration and Congress, the disagreement between the two parties lies in the speed with which each party thinks it is necessary to reduce the federal budget deficit. The Republican Party wants to speed up the deficit reduction and has been trying to introduce an amendment to the Constitution requiring the U.S. Administration to maintain a balanced budget. Consequently, the Republican Party has been looking for expenditure items in the federal budget to cut, and, of course, foreign aid is at the top of the list.

['Atiyah] Does this mean that we enjoy the support of the two U.S. parties, and therefore they will not reduce the aid to the Middle East area?

[Butrus-Ghali] There is no doubt that we enjoy the support of the two parties. However, Congress is facing much pressure by American pressure groups seeking to maintain their share in the federal budget. Within two to three years, these pressures could grow, forcing one of the two sides to approve a larger cut in foreign aid.

['Atiyah] According to the United States, we have not used the aid allocations and that several billion dollars are still in the pipeline [last word in English]. Is this due to American obstacles or bureaucratic procedures?

[Butrus-Ghali] First, let me correct some basic figures regarding the billions of dollars in the pipeline that have not been used yet. If we look at the real figures, we will find that, until 30 September 1994, about $6.502 billion in U.S. aid has been allocated for development projects, import programs, and monetary exchange programs. These are the programs for which U.S. aid is allocated. Of this figure, we used $4.747 billion to carry out approved programs, or 73 percent of the available funds. What remains in the pipeline is only $1.755 billion, or 27 percent of the available funds. There might be a justification for talking about these billions. In the middle of the eighties, we had $3.4 billions in the pipeline. The absorption capacity of the Egyptian economy then was

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weak. It could not match the speed with which money was allocated for the implementation of projects.

Of the money that has not been used yet, 23.4 percent is designated for the housing and services sector and 20 percent for the electricity sector. These are the two sectors in which infrastructure projects are concentrated. In the housing and services sector, we have the sewage projects in Alexandria, Cairo, and the Suez Canal cities. The cost of these projects represents the biggest part of the available funds for this sector. Naturally, these infrastructure projects take a long time to complete. The unused funds are also designated for electricity projects, particularly upgrading the Alexandria electricity network and boosting the power stations in southern and western Cairo. All of them are infrastructure projects that take time to complete.

Therefore, the delay in using the available funds is not due to American or Egyptian bureaucracy as much as it is to the nature of the projects for which the funds are allocated.

['Atiyah] We are not the only country that benefits from this aid. The United States also benefits from it, not only politically but also economically. According to American studies, this aid contributes to U.S. employment and promotes American exports. What is your opinion on this?

[Butrus-Ghali] It would be naive to think that the donor countries provide aid for purely humanitarian reasons. This could be true in major international crises and disasters. However, in most cases, particularly in the case of aid provided year after year, the donor countries look for the political and the economic benefit they can gain from this aid.

The political benefit lies in strengthening the political relations between the donor and the recipient states. As for the economic benefit, the donor countries stipulate that the grants and easy loans they provide should be spent on imports from them. There is no difference in this respect between the United States, Japan, France, England, or any other state. Furthermore, there is no shame or fear as far as the recipient countries are concerned. Like the other Third World countries we need commodities and services from all the countries of the world. Therefore, if we get financing for part of them, we must redistribute our financial resources. We must, for example, spend the grants and easy loans we receive from France on French goods that we really need and spend the American grants and easy loans on American goods.

['Atiyah] How far have the negotiations with the IMF progressed?

[Butrus-Ghali] The negotiations with the IMF are continuing. While the IMF appreciates Egypt's position in the economic policies it is carrying out, it disagrees with us about these policies. Therefore, we decided that since we both agree on the final objective, which is to increase the rate of Egyptian economic growth and exports, we should let published economic data judge whether the Egyptian position is correct or not. Data proving the correctness of the Egyptian view have begun appearing. The annual domestic product rose by more than 3 percent in fiscal year 1993/94, Egyptian exports continued to grow, and all the other basic economic indices, such as the interest rate, the inflation rate, and the budget deficit, remained stable.

['Atiyah] Since the reforms are Egyptian and the IMF's role is advisory—that is, we can accept its advice or reject it—why is there disagreement with it?

[Butrus-Ghali] It is true that the IMF plays an advisory role, we can accept or reject its advice, and there is no coercion to accept any specific economic policies. However, to approve the third stage in the process of reducing Egypt's foreign debts, the donor countries, particularly the Paris Club countries, have requested that the IMF show that it approves of the Egyptian economic policies. They do not ask that we accept everything the IMF suggests, but we have to convince it of the feasibility and suitability of the policies that we apply to reform the Egyptian economy. I think that both the Egyptian government and the IMF have decided to let the rise in the rate of economic growth, the increase in exports, and the continued stability in the other economic indices be the judge, and this is becoming evident in the Egyptian economy.

['Atiyah] Egypt has turned down a loan from the World Bank and has refused to use facilities offered by the IMF. Why?

[Butrus-Ghali] It is true that Egypt has rejected the second part of a structural reform loan. It has also rejected all the parts of a support loan from the IMF. We did that because the Egyptian balance of payments is good, and we do not need financial support to cover a deficit in it. The existence of a balance of payments' deficit that cannot be covered is the primary reason that states seek loans from the IMF and the World Bank. The loans of the IMF and the World Bank are not given on easy terms, and the service cost of these loans is high. States use these loans only when it is necessary. The loans were not necessary in the case of the Egyptian economy and Egyptian balance of payments.

['Atiyah] What then are the broad lines of the second stage of the economic reform program?

[Butrus-Ghali] The second stage of the reform program is based on the need to exploit the successes we have made in the first stage in order to achieve one objective: to raise the standard of living of the Egyptian citizen. Raising the standard of living depends on two basic factors. The first is increasing employment, because we cannot raise the standard of living of the Egyptian citizen if he is without work. The second is increasing the Egyptian citizen's ability to meet the cost of living. We cannot raise the standard of living only by providing employment, because a citizen probably cannot earn enough money from his job to cover the cost of living. These two components are essential for

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raising the standard of living of the Egyptian citizen. Therefore, we must apply economic policies that will increase employment, by increasing the number of jobs in the national economy, and increase the earnings or wages in the new jobs.

['Atiyah] Does this mean that we need to increase wages to match the rise in prices?

[Butrus-Ghali] This is the wrong method to increase the Egyptian citizen's ability to meet the cost of living. This is the easy and yet the wrong method. It is easy, because all we need to do is make a simple decision to raise the worker's wages. It is wrong, because unless an increase in productivity accompanies the increase in the worker's wages, this increase in wages will evaporate because of the increase in prices. This is what happened in the past. A partial solution was applied by increasing the wages to match the rise in prices. The increase in wages was then followed by another increase in prices that wiped out the increase in wages, and so on. The cycle went back to where it started, and the workers again demanded a pay rise.

['Atiyah] What then is the solution?

[Butrus-Ghali] The solution is the one being sought in the second stage of the economic program. The solution is to increase the worker's productivity—that is, to increase his ability to produce a larger quantity of goods in the same number of hours. If a worker now produces four units, we should make it possible for him to produce five, six, or seven units in the same time. Suppose a worker earns one pound per unit or four pounds for four units per hour of work, because this is all he can produce with the existing management and machines. Also, suppose he finds out that these four pounds are not enough for him and his family to maintain a decent standard of living. The solution is to give him better machines, production tools, and management system to produce five, six, or seven units per hour of work. He can then earn five, six, or seven pounds in the same hour of work in which he used to earn four pounds before the reform.

['Atiyah] What are the other components of the economic reform program? How do they relate to the aims to increase employment and increase productivity?

[Butrus-Ghali] Increasing investment is the key to increasing employment and productivity. Therefore, all the policies are geared to increase investment and eventually increase employment and productivity and raise the Egyptian citizen's standard of living. If we look at the components of the second stage of the economic reform program, we will find that the privatization policy aims at transferring the existing production units to the private sector to expand them, improve their efficiency, and eventually increase the worker's productivity to meet the cost of living. It has been proved all over the world that the private sector is more investment oriented and efficient than the public sector. The Egyptian private sector has proved that it is able and has the desire to invest.

The second component of the government's economic policy is to reduce bureaucracy and bureaucratic intervention. Its ultimate aim is to give the private sector incentives to increase investments, simplify the procedures for investment in the private sector, and reduce the investment costs. President Husni Mubarak's decision to offer land free of charge or to lower the price of land in certain areas and other government reforms are aimed at reducing the cost of investment in Egypt and thus increasing investment and eventually increasing employment and productivity.

The third component is liberalizing foreign trade to increase employment and productivity eventually. Liberalizing foreign trade decreases the cost of production by decreasing customs on the various production components. It also opens the Egyptian market to foreign goods and services to compete with Egyptian goods and services. This is on condition that the liberalization of foreign trade is done gradually according to calculated steps.

['Atiyah] Wouldn't the liberalizing of foreign trade destroy Egyptian industry?

[Butrus-Ghali] No. The liberalization of foreign trade will not destroy Egyptian industry, because its main purpose is to help the Egyptian industry face foreign competition, improve the quality of Egyptian products, and increase efficiency and productivity to make it possible for Egyptian goods to invade the world markets.

There is no reason why Egyptian industry cannot compete with foreign industry in any modern production field. Machines and services might be available and cost the same all over the world. However, production costs are relatively lower here. Therefore, there is no justification for the Egyptian industry not to compete with foreign industries.

['Atiyah] The main objective, therefore, is to increase investment. Is there another method to raise the standard of living?

[Butrus-Ghali] Increasing investment is the essential instrument in the second stage of the economic reform program. Liberalizing trade, rationalizing the taxation system, and the privatization program are designed to serve the investment process. All the other policies, such as stabilizing the exchange rate, lowering inflation, and reducing the budget deficit, are aimed at creating a suitable climate to increase investments. This is the real goal of the second stage. This is the only way to achieve the goals of the second stage, which are to raise the Egyptian citizen's standard of living.

Libya

Opposition: 'Extraordinary' Security Enforced

MM1703103595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources from the opposition National Front for the Salvation of Libya have said that

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extraordinary security measures have been enforced throughout Libya. "They include checkpoints and roadblocks in several locations in the main cities. And citizens have been searched at random by the regime's security. It has been discovered that the authorities have taken these measures in the framework of the large-scale arrest campaign they have been conducting since the recent incidents in the Bani Walid area. The Front previously issued a statement, saying that numbers of demonstrations in the Bani Walid area burned the military intelligence headquarters and the offices of the revolutionary committees in the area. And that following the incident the regime launched a large-scale campaign, arresting more than 300 citizens, and the campaign is still continuing." [quotation marks as published] [passage omitted]

U.S. 'Power Mania' Over Lockerbie Issue

LD1503212295 Tripoli JANA in English 1444 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Rabie [March] 15 JAMAHARIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The American Government is persisting in its intransigence and its rejection of all [word indistinct] to solve the crisis between the Great Jamahariyah and western states and the lifting of the unfair sanctions imposed on the [word indistinct] Libyan people.

A White House spokesman annouced that the American Government will not review the sanctions imposed on the Great Jamahariyah unfairly by some western states through the so-called Security Council. The spokesman, was responding to a demand by the king of Morocco, who is currently visiting Washington to review the unfair sanctions due to their negative repercussions and implications on the Arab Maghreb Union generally and on Morocco particularly.

He insisted on renewing the American position which rejects all initiatives adopted by the Arab League, the OAU, the Non-aligned Movement, the Islamic Conference Organisation, in addition to numerous regional and international organisations, all of whom confirmed the need to reach a fair and just settlement in the two suspects in the so-called Lockerbie case.

The American spokesman said that the two suspects must stand trial in America or England and boasted that the unfair sanctions will remain in force until American and English demands are met.

This confirms once again that the American Government does not give any consideration to the resolutions and recommendations of international organisations, including the United Nations Organisation and the so-called Security Council as America goes on imposing its point of view and its antagonistic policies on all nations including the Arab-Libyan people.

This also confirms once again what has been announced repeatedly by Libya: The UN and its institutions do not in fact exist: the United Nations is in effect America who punishes whoever its wants to punish without any consideration for the others, including other permanent member states in the Security Council.

JANA's political editor commented on the statement made by the American White House spokesman in which he resumed his country's continuation of intransigence towards the so-called Lockerbie issue. The editor pointed out that this stance reveals once again the nature of the Security Council which is in fact an American Security Council. In taking this position, America is in fact making decisions before convening this council this enhances to the whole world the credibility of our judgement on the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah as being in fact adopted by America and not the U.N. which is supposed to express the voice of the peoples of the world.

The editor recalled the breach of the internal regulations of the council by America when it decided to discuss this issue two days ahead of the original date stated on the agenda of the council turning the sessions of the so-called Security Council into a rubber stamp for the decisions [words indistinct] by the [word indistinct] administration. JANA's political editor asserted that while the American stance constitutes an act of contempt for the will of the peoples of the world who called through regional, international and popular organizations for the lifting of the unjust measures on the Libyan Arab people, it also shows that it is America which has become isolated from the international community. America is imposing its decisions and policies on the world as a result of power mania.

Saudi Media's Silence on Western 'Campaign'

LD1603202795 Tripoli JANA in English 1755 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al Rabie [March] 16, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The editor of the Jamahiriyah News Agency has noted, through his monitoring for the responses of the Saudi international media, towards the campaign launched by western quakmoys [as received] regarding the situation in Saudia [Saudi Arabia], that utter silence is dominating that media.

The editor pointed out that Saudi-owned newspapers (AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, AL HAYAH, the magazines of AL-MAJALLAH and AL-WASAT and other Saudi publications, together with a number of tv and radio stations, all based in Europe, are ignoring completely the campaign, which is quite shocking. It is as if that campaign was targeted against a distant alien country and not Saudia which owns and funds these publications.

The editor wondered whether that position means a silent acceptance from the part of these publications to the American, British and Western media campaign, or whether that was merely cheap connivance as a prelude

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for the forthcoming role which is already prepared by these publications, whose cost are very high.

The editor revealed that these publications have been engaged in the propaganda and publicity for the consumption societies, the American style. These publications were promoting the culture of absenteeism and satire concerning the criteria of the Arab Islamic entity, in addition to their suspected role in open propaganda for some personalities within Saudia in a way that fuels the internal conflict, which is always in the benefit of the conspirators in London and Washington.

The editors said that these publications abandoned their assumed role to link Arabs and Arab communities in [words indistinct] with their homeland and their national entity. They adopted the opposite role as they opened their pages for known mercenaries who undermine and attack the calls for Arab unity, the liberation of Palestine and Lebanon and the establishment of Arab force.

The editor questioned what is the use behind the continued high expenditure on such glossy and coloured papers as long as they are cowering and siding [with] the enemies of the nation.

The editor of the Jamahiriyah News Agency drew the attention to the history of mercenaries of this category, and to the dustbin of history into which they are kicked by the honourables of the nations.

Morocco

Rights Minister Urges Reporting of Violations

LD1403234795 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mohamed Ziane, minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of human rights, said we will fight all instances of violations of human rights whatever their source may be, because his majesty, the king, has set a clear policy in this direction to guarantee and protect the individual and collective rights of all citizens.

In a working session he held today with a delegation from the Bar in Rabat, Ziane recalled that the task he will be carrying out is simple and clear, because it will only be an implementation of his majesty's wish in this sphere. [passage omitted]

He stressed that they [lawyers] should inform the ministry of all violations that they might encounter when carrying out their tasks, and he expressed to them the ministry's unconditional support for their work for the benefit of human rights in Morocco.

Sudan

SPLM Leaders Announce 'New Sudan Brigade'

NC1603221995 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Colonel John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM], which has been fighting the Sudanese Government for 12 years, has announced that he has decided, in cooperation with the northern party opposition, to take the ongoing war to northern Sudan, including Khartoum. Garang, who spoke in Arabic in an exclusive interview with MBC in the jungles of southern Sudan, said he is awaiting the arrival of a delegation from the Sudanese opposition to discuss the formation of a committee to act as a government-in-exile. The following report was sent by Ahmad al-Qurashi from southern Sudan.

[Begin recording] [al-Qurashi] For the first time since the SPLM was established in 1983, SPLM Leader Dr. John Garang has announced a new program called the "New Sudan Brigade." He denied that the formation of the "New Sudan Brigade" will affect the SPLM's alliances, especially with the other Sudanese forces.

[Garang] The goal is to organize the Sudanese people on the new bases of New Sudan. This initiative aims to increase the Sudanese people's potential for the new Sudan struggle. Since November 1994 we have engaged in a dialogue to form the "New Sudan Brigade." We have written the program together with them. Today, we announced it [previous three words in English] to the Sudanese people. The [Islamic National] Front government must leave. In order for it to leave, there must be cooperation between the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] and the other opposition forces in Sudan. So [previous word in English], for the front government to leave, the Ummah and DUP [Democratic Unionist Party] must cooperate with us and we must cooperate with them. This cooperation has a future. This future is the path to a new Sudan. We cannot return to the old Sudan. [previous sentence in English] New Sudan will replace all wars, since 1955. One would hope [previous three words in English] we have learned from history and will not return to the old, but instead proceed to the new.

[Al-Qurashi] Former Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr. Mansur Khalid explained the details of the new program.

[Khalid] For historical and geographical reasons, the SPLM has not been able to effectively move the struggle to the north of the country. This brigade will deal with the struggle issues in the North. This initiative for the first time provides an opportunity in the movement for the northern elements and for sympathizers among the northerners both inside and outside Sudan. It accepts all Sudanese regardless of their race, origin, party loyalties, or religious doctrines. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Ukraine Said Arming Islamic Front

NC1603173895 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 12 Mar 95 p 11

[From "The Brothers' Page"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to exclusive sources in the Ukrainian capital Kiev, a Sudanese military transport aircraft recently made several flights between Kiev and Khartoum to transport weapons and hardware to

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Sudan under the pretext of exporting fruit to Kiev. The five-member crew was accompanied by representatives of the Sudanese regime. They coordinate with agents and middlemen as well as with Russian mafia in Ukraine to transport small-caliber weapons, machine guns, landmines, RPG's, and raw material for the manufacture of explosives.

The sources said the crew members include two Islamic Front figures. The sources added that the transport of weapons to the Sudanese capital might be linked with an impending offensive that the Islamic Front government is planning against south Sudan.

Bilateral Talks Begin With Iran

EA1603162095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between Sudan and Iran opened at the Foreign Ministry this morning. The Sudanese side was led by 'Umar Yusuf Baridu, the first undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry, while the Iranian side was led by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Eslam. The two sides discussed cooperation between the two countries, and ways of promoting bilateral relations. After the talks, 'Umar Baridu said that the Iranian delegation's visit concerns preparations for the visit to Khartoum by Nateq Nuri, speaker of the Consultative Assembly on 11 April.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha today met in his office Sheykh ol-Eslam, the Iranian deputy foreign minister and leader of the visiting delegation, with whom he discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest, and relations between the two countries.

Tunisia

'Arafat Briefs Ben Ali on Recent Developments

LD1603185695 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali met with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at Carthage Palace this morning. Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia and Hakam Bal'awi, member of Fatah's Central Committee, were also present.

After the meeting, President 'Arafat said he was happy to meet his excellency the president and to brief him on the developments since their last -meeting, and happy also to agree with him on calling for the speedy resumption of multilateral talks. In this respect, he said: I thank his excellency the president for his call for the resumption of these talks so that we can activate the implementation of the agreement signed between us and the Israelis and which is still deadlocked. There is an obvious procrastination over the main issues of the agreement on the implementation of the rest of the withdrawal from the West Bank, the holding of elections, and the handing over of powers as stipulated in the agreement, in addition to the issue of the settlements which are being extended in all directions.

President 'Arafat added that he informed the president about his talks with British Prime Minister John Major, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and the European troika, and also about his talks with the Israelis, particularly his recent meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. He added in this respect: The Israelis tried, through this meeting, to show progress had been achieved in the implementation of the agreement. He also deplored the lack of progress on this matter, saying: We do need the support of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on this point and his experience so that we can boost the peace process and implement the agreement that we signed in Washington and Cairo.

Finally, 'Arafat thanked the president for the noble efforts he is making to support the Palestinian position and which, he said, we will not forget, whether we are in Gaza, Jericho, or here in Tunisia. 'Arafat also renewed his thanks to the Tunisian president, Government, and people for their constant support for the cause of the Palestinian people.

Farming Projects With Spain, Israel Canceled

TA1503121195 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 15 Mar 95 p 2

[Report by Moti Bassok]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis has recently canceled its participation in a farming project jointly planned by Tunis, Spain, and Israel.

Jerusalem has noted that the recent Tunisian move follows a series of moves indicating a change in Tunisian attitude to Israel. It has recently delayed the opening of an Israeli interest office in Tunisia and opening its own office in Tel Aviv. Also, it recently canceled its participation in a naval exercise that was scheduled to be held off its shores with the participation of Israel, the United States and other Middle East countries.

Western Sahara

President: UN Peace Process 'Still Stagnant'

LD1503095195 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Saharan President Mohamed Abdelaziz [name and title as heard] said in Strasbourg that the peace process, which was started by the United Nations in Western Sahara, was still stagnant. He also

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said that the fact that the identification of voters started over six months ago, and despite Polisario's [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] concessions, did not give the impetus for overcoming all the obstacles facing the peace path.

The Saharan president reviewed before the community for peace for the Saharan people, which comes under the umbrella of the European parliament, the latest developments in Western Sahara. He also disclosed all the various difficulties faced by the Saharan people today.

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Kuwait

Cabinet on Sanctions, AL-ANBA' Suspension

LD1503182395 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 15 Mar—The Kuwaiti council of ministers today praised the unanimous decision of the UN Security Council [UNSC] to extend the international sanctions against the Iraqi regime for failing to implement the international resolutions relating to the war to liberate Kuwait.

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dakhil, minister of state for cabinet affairs and minister of planning, made a statement after today's cabinet meeting, which was chaired by Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah, heir apparent and prime minister. Al-Dakhil said that the cabinet "expressed its appreciation for the resolute and firm stands of the UNSC member-states—stands which reflected their awareness of the hostile nature of the Iraqi regime and their eagerness to make this regime responsible for the complete implementation of the UNSC resolutions, foremost among them the freeing of Kuwaiti POW's and hostages detained in Iraqi prisons, and the return of stolen Kuwaiti property." [passage omitted]

Al-Dakhil said that the Cabinet "praised the resolute stands of fraternal Gulf Cooperation Council states and the United States with regard to the just demands of the State of Kuwait—stands that must lead to strengthening the foundations of peace and security in the region."

Al-Dakhil said that the cabinet "decided to ban the publication of the newspaper AL-ANBA' as of tomorrow 16 March 1995 for five days for publishing material which breached the requirements of the national interest." Al-Dakhil added: "Appreciating the national responsibility and the requirements of the public interest the cabinet decided to proceed with the appropriate legal measures against offending newspapers in implementation of article 35 of law no 3 of 1961, and also to promulgate a law on general printing and publishing which will lead to preventing the publication of anything that tends to be offensive to the interest of the country and tends to fan hatred and sedition in Kuwaiti society—a law which will seek to safeguard the integrity, security, and stability of the country."

Officials Criticize Suspension

NC1703120795 Paris AFP in English 1139 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, March 17 (AFP)—Kuwaiti lawmakers Friday [17 March] accused the government of trying to muzzle the press after it suspended publication of the daily AL-ANBA'.

"The government should have consulted parliament before taking such a decision, which risks poisoning relations between the executive and legislature," Islamist deputy Ahmad Baqir told AFP.

The Kuwaiti government decided Wednesday to suspend until March 20 AL-ANBA"s publication. The paper, essentially allied with the government, was accused of publishing articles "harmful to the country's interests or reputation."

Baqir said sanctions were necessary, but "only provided freedom of speech is unaffected and no new restrictions are imposed on the press."

Hamad al-Jawan, a liberal MP quoted by the daily Al-Qabas, said the government had exploited attacks on Al-Anba' by certain deputies "to deliver a crushing blow to the press and freedom of speech."

AL-QABAS and another daily, AL-WATAN, also condemned the government suspension of Al-ANBA'.

In Washington, Human Rights Watch protested the decision Thursday, calling it a violation of the principle of freedom of speech, in an open letter to the Kuwaiti prince and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah.

The rights group also expressed concern at Kuwait's threat to sanction other publications and journalists, saying the moves marked "serious violations of the principle of freedom of speech enshrined in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights."

Political Advisor on U.S. in Gulf, Iran's Nuclear Menace

95LH0080A Doha AL-SHARQ in Arabic 24 Jan 95 p 5

[Article by Ibrahim Isma'il: "Gulf's Future Possibilities Linked to GCC States, America, Iran, and Iraq; America Prepares to Strike Iranian Nuclear Reactor; U.S. Forces in Gulf Will Be Target for Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi, political advisor to the speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament, gave a lecture at the Doha Sheraton Hotel on 23 January 1995 at the invitation of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Office of Culture and Arts. The lecture's title was "The Gulf and Peninsula...Future Possibilities."

At the outset of the lecture, Dr. al-Nafisi said that the future possibilities of the Gulf and the Peninsula were linked with and subject to many American perspectives and views vis-a-vis the area. He said that the United States was a world power with a heavy presence in the Gulf and Peninsula region, with long-standing and broad interests there. One should carefully read and ponder the writings of former American presidents to see the great importance of the Gulf and Peninsula area from the perspective of successive American administrations. One of the most important of these books is Eisenhower's memoirs entitled *The House*, in which he talks about the Gulf area. He says that this region is the most valuable piece of real estate in the world. There is

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another valuable book of basic sources in learning about American strategy vis-a-vis the region. The book was written by a number of American experts, including Bruce Palmer], Maxwell Taylor, Bruce Holloway, and Theodore Milton [names as transliterated]. In this book, they discuss this region's importance. They make it clear that the region's strategic importance is linked to oil and that the object of this strategy is to maintain the high standard of living that is enjoyed by Western peoples, including the American people. In this book, they say that the only possible way for the Western economy to maintain its present degree of productivity is to control the oil in the Gulf. In this valuable book, these experts warn about losing control over Gulf oil, and they say that that would result in an extremely serious consequence to the Western standard of living and economy. Bruce Holloway says: "It is almost a matter of the availability of oil in the future giving us the most dangerous crisis we shall ever face. The next difficult crisis will be a long one, and the percentage of our oil that we import from the Gulf will rise steadily, despite efforts to provide local oil in America. If our supplies dwindle, the result will be an immediate drop in our military efficiency. Our capability to use the weapons of war will be reduced to zero." Therefore American power is linked to America's obtaining oil in considerable quantities at suitable prices. Holloway goes on to say: "Oil resources must be protected because of their economic and military importance. The land and sea lines of supply must be defended from the 'Gulf' source to the American market. This requires military bases in areas of the world to look after the attainment of this goal."

Another official, the former American minister of energy says that, inevitably, there will not be enough oil, or rather, it is necessary to define other minerals that fall within American interests. He listed some of these minerals, which include chrome, manganese, cobalt, platinum, zinc, mercury, and nickel. He says: "We must use our armies to protect these minerals." Therefore, there are extraordinarily important American strategic interests in this region, especially in the oil strip from Kuwait to Oman. The idea of occupying this strip militarily was proposed in the American Congress in 1975, and the American Government affirmed it during the short-lived embargo that the Gulf states imposed on the export of oil to America. This idea can be obtained in a document belonging to the American Library of Congress for less than $1. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait gave them the opportunity to implement this plan, which was devised in 1975, since Americans have come to and remain in the area.

Four Possibilities

Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi stated that there are four possibilities in the Gulf area's future. These possibilities are linked to the protracted tension that draws together Iran, Iraq, the United States, and the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] nations into its web. Each of these elements is associated with a possibility. He discussed these possibilities and said that the so-called peace process is an American-Zionist scheme. "In order to achieve this process, we find ourselves having to pass through four stages. The first stage was the political, diplomatic, and human preparation toward establishing the Zionist entity on the territory of Palestine. During this stage, the Jews promoted immigration to Israel, i.e., the land of return, and extracted recognition for the right of immigration and the right of the Jews to a national homeland. During the second stage, forcible seizure was established, there was more international recognition, and the entity was strengthened militarily. The third stage was the firm establishment of the state after 1956 following the attack on Egypt. During this stage, their circle of expropriation was widened, and the idea of security borders proposed. It was marked by three wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973. In fact, the Zionist entity expanded and occupied the West Bank, Sinai, and Jerusalem. Thus we see the Zionists advancing from one stage to another."

Dr. al-Nafisi said that Zionist historians and research centers inside the Zionist entity had studied the 1973 War and the Egyptian Army's brilliant crossing to the other side of the Suez Canal. This was an objective study that took them several years to make. It is considered to be the most important study of that war. The former head of the intelligence apparatus, Yehoshafat Harkavi, wrote a book entitled, *The Arab Mind*, in which he says that the Arab is a stubborn person in conflicts, or rather, a fierce person. Therefore, you can take much more from the Arab in times of peace than you can in war time, because what moves the Arab is fanaticism, whether nationalism, racism, or religion. He said that anyone who has read the Muqaddamah of Ibn Khaldun and the seven volumes of Ibn Khaldun's history could deduce from these works the truth of the Arab personality.

Harkavi goes on to say that "one should stop here because this ummah [Arab Islamic community as a whole] has proved it has capabilities and reserves in terms of mobilization and victory in the future. This compels us to warn against wars with the ummah and to find an alternative, which is peace and negotiations. With these two things, we can take what we want because the Arab is lazy, does not persevere or persist, and is faint-hearted. He lacks the capability to pursue his desires. For that reason, poets predominate among the Arabs."

Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi said that the fourth stage toward achieving the Zionist-American scheme was the stage of objective evaluation of the 1973 War. Zionist goals in this stage were to open Arab land for Zionists to deal directly with Arab social, intellectual, and cultural structures. Those who think that Israel's goal from all this is economic are completely wrong, because the Zionists are able to extend bridges of economic trade with the countries of Europe and America. However, it is more important than the economy to open Arab territory for direct dealings with the Arab citizen, to apply the Zionist cultural program to the personna of the Arab citizen. In

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Egypt, the Zionists have tried to continue this stage, despite Egypt's signing of the Camp David Accord. The cultural program that the Zionist state intends to achieve is running into several obstacles, because the personna of the Egyptian Muslim Arab people rejects dealing with the Zionist program.

Dividing the Arabs

Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi said that the Zionists "have been able to divide the Arabs in negotiations, and have changed their orbits. I question what the PLO has obtained from the Zionists and what it has given. In my opinion, they gave the Zionists more than the intifadah gave them and received nothing significant. On the contrary, the leadership of the Palestinian struggle has become hostage to something they call self-government. There is 'Arafat staggering in Gaza and Jericho. Take note that the population density in Gaza is higher than the population density in India. If you compare the population density per sq km in Gaza with its counterpart in India, Gaza will be the highest. In addition, its economy is down to the lowest level. Therefore, the Zionists offered Gaza to al-Sadat, but he told them: What would I do with it! He was right. Should he begin to solve the population problem or resolve the problem of the deteriorating economy? In addition, Gaza was the source of the intifadah and the leaders of the Islamic movements. Therefore, the Jews agreed to make it an area of self-government along with Jericho. As for Jericho, you should know that the Jews consider it an unclean area according to Talmud. Therefore, Gaza represents an inflamed problem for them, while Jericho is an undesirable area."

Dr. al-Nafisi said: "We believe that the goal of the Zionists in hurrying to push the GCC states into tense relations between the GCC states and Iran is to introduce the region to a new stage of tension. Accordingly, we would apprise officials in the GCC of the danger of nonobjective, illogical, and undesirable haste, which must be given thorough consideration. There should be no contact with Zionists, because the Zionist-American scheme still exists. There are many obstacles before it, and American and Jewish politicians recognize that."

Cooperation Council

Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi discussed the second of the possibilities pertaining to the future of the Gulf region. This possibility is connected with the GCC. He said that any established organization passes through three stages; first, the stage of being established, then the stage of application and, finally, the stage of accomplishments. The establishment stage should be short and the application stage long, lasting for 10 years until the accomplishment stage is entered. "In my opinion, with all modesty and candor, we are still in the establishment stage. I doubt that the GCC states have been honest in applying the organization's Constitution, which emphasizes that the organization's goal is to achieve unity through coordination and integration. However, the GCC nations have become estranged. Some were much closer to others before the GCC organization was established. The organization has become an obstacle to unity and not an inducement for it. Its Constitution says that a mechanism must be established to settle disputes between member states. This mechanism has not been established, has not been developed, and has not looked at any of the many border disputes among the GCC states. This has forced them to turn to outside agencies to settle disputes. Therefore, the GCC has not passed through its establishment stage."

American-Iranian Confrontation

Dr. al-Nafisi said that the third possibility for the Gulf region's future is related to America and Iran, with the possibility of an American-Iranian confrontation. "This is a serious possibility, and we must consider its dangers to ourselves in the future. We should be aware of this matter, or rather, we must be aware of it from now on. These days there is a Zionist-American discussion centered against Iran, concerning its nuclear activities. This talk reminds us of the discussion about Iraq in 1981, preceding the strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, when Israeli aircraft hit this reactor. In April 1995, a number of nations will be asked to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty, to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. These nations include Egypt, Israel, Iran, and others. The goal of this talk about Iranian nuclear activities is to turn the spotlight away from Zionist nuclear activities. The goal of the talk about Iran is to stir up tension in relations between the Arabs and Iran, preparatory to striking at the Iranian nuclear reactor in Bushehr."

Dr. al-Nafisi said that "we must be aware that confronting Iran is one thing and confronting Iraq is another. Iraq with its geography and problems might give the United States and the Zionists an opportunity to encircle and strike at it, but Iran is a different matter. It has a population of 64 million, and the Revolution Guard in Iran has fighters and airports and 1.5 million men. The nature of the Iranian regime is unlike the Iraqi regime. The Iranian regime is the child of a revolution of millions, and it has legal movements. Iran occupies the entire eastern shore of the Gulf and has the capability to confront America. The Iranians were able to oust the Americans from Lebanon, when they bombed 452 Marines at one time, and Congress shouted to get the Marines out of Lebanon.

Dr. al-Nafisi went on to say that if an Iranian-American confrontation occurs, the American forces in the Gulf would be a target for Iran. "America doesn't care about any country, nor about anything except its own interests and those of the Zionists. When the Iraqi forces bombed several Shiite villages in northern Iraq, which is populated by Kurds, with mustard gas, a number of Kurdish leaders videotaped them. They took the tape and boarded a plane for America. They asked to meet with Bush, and when he received them, they played the entire

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tape for him. The tape showed children, women, and old men dying, while yellow mustard gas spread in the atmosphere. When the tape was over, Bush said that it was an internal Iraqi matter and had nothing to do with us."

Dr. al-Nafisi quoted Jalal al-Talabani as saying: "When Iraq invaded Kuwait, they found that that threatened their interests; Iraq threatens their interests." They took the videotape and showed it on three television stations. They invited experts from all specialties to discuss it.

Dr. al-Nafisi said, in conclusion, that "the fourth possibility for the future of the Gulf region is connected with Iraq, in my opinion. Anyone who has monitored and followed American policy vis-a-vis Iraq from the iniquitous Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in the summer of 1990 until now, cannot—as a result—get away from the fact that the United States is [not, omitted as published] anxious for political change inside Iraq. The United States wants the situation to remain as it is, so that Iraq will continue in a weak and backward condition. This serves Zionist interests and, at the same time, the United States wants to keep Iraq as a threat to the Gulf nations, but under U.S. domination. Therefore, the one under the threat, i.e., the Gulf nations, is dependent on the one who dominates the threatener, which is America. In other words, America wants to maintain Iraq as it is, so that the Gulf region will continue to stay in America's embrace."

Dr. al-Nafisi went on to say: "We always turn to the Americans and vice versa. We have bought weapons from them that are beyond our capacity and capability and beyond our needs. Despite that, we did not use them in the war to liberate Kuwait, because it was the coalition forces that did that."

These remarks were made in the lecture delivered by Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nafisi before a large number of officials, ambassadors, and others who filled the conference hall of the Doha Sheraton. He was introduced by the senior radio lecturer, Muhammad al-Mu'dadi, assistant director of Radio Qatar.

Saudi Arabia

CDLR Spokesman Expecting 'Significant Event' in Riyadh

MS1703113995 London THE INDEPENDENT in English 17 Mar 95 p 18

[Report by Michael Sheridan: "Saudi Islamists Plan Protest Vigil"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Militant Islamic activists have issued an unprecedented call for co-ordinated demonstrations after weekly prayers today at mosques in the Saudi Arabian cities of Riyadh, Jeddah and Ha'il, in a challenge to the Saudi royal family. The call coincided with a visit to the kingdom by the US Defense Secretary, William Perry, on a one-week tour of the Gulf to bolster US "security strategy".

"We are expecting there to be a significant event in Riyadh," said a spokesman in London for the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), a fundamentalist group opposed to the Saudi government.

Radical activists have frequently predicted trouble in the past only to see their prognostications come to nothing. But sources close to the Islamic opposition said the militants had orchestrated a strategy to embarrass the government, sending more than 500 faxes to supporters in Saudi Arabia over the past few weeks.

The CDLR spokesman said his group was calling on the faithful simply to congregate and to hold a vigil at mosques in each city, "just to read the Koran and to show their anger". It had designated the King Abd-al 'Aziz mosque in Riyadh as the focal point for the demonstration. The mosque stands in an area inhabited by expatriates near the Khozama hotel, which is used by visiting business people.

Under Saudi law there is no freedom of assembly and the government could use the security forces to break up any illegal gathering. But it is difficult to see how the police could intervene within the precincts of a mosque without offending worshippers.

The CDLR has chosen today because the annual pilgrimage to Mecca is drawing near, thereby focusing attention in the Muslim world upon the kingdom. The move comes as the US is seeking to strengthen its presence in the Gulf in pursuit of the Clinton administration's strategy of "dual containment" towards Iraq and Iran.

Mr Perry's visit follows a trip to the region by the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. The US intends to step up its naval and air enforcement of sanctions on Iraq, which is reckoned to be selling $800m (500m pounds) worth of oil through smuggling.

It also wants to keep up pressure on Iran, which recently deployed Hawk anti-aircraft missiles near the Straits of Hormuz.

Labor Minister Reviews Copenhagen Declaration

LD1503185195 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1612 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 15 March (SPA)—His Excellency Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Fayiz, the minister of labor and social affairs, has praised the leading social policy followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of King Fahd bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, which is aimed at achieving prosperity for all and which proceeds from the principle of social solidarity, which itself is one of the foundations of our true religion.

His excellency, who led the Saudi delegation to the World Summit on Social Development, which ended in the Copenhagen two days ago, said that the delegation clarified the kingdom's position on the declaration and

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the program of action issued by the summit, adding that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adheres to Islamic Shari'ah and its cultural values and heritage. The minister also reiterated Saudi Arabia's commitment to the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam issued by the Organization of Islamic Conference in 1990.

On the provision of job opportunities and support for the productive workforce, his excellency told SPA that the Saudi delegation clarified Saudi Arabia's contribution in this respect, as it offers job opportunities and posts to all citizens qualified to enter the job market. He added that the kingdom helps strengthen development in many countries by opening its doors to large numbers of workers, the majority of whom come from developing countries. These workers, the minister said, enjoy total freedom since they do not have to pay any taxes or duties and they are free to transfer their savings to their country of origin.

His Excellency Muhammad al-Fayiz said that "during the summit, the kingdom reiterated its total commitment to all the agreements of the International Labor Organization, which it endorses." He also talked about the assistance the kingdom is giving to developing countries through the Saudi Development Fund.

The minister indicated that he told the summit that the loans granted by the Saudi Development Fund to developing countries to finance their development projects cannot be written off because the fund can only continue to grant loans to other countries if the borrowing countries pay off their debts.

The minister added: "The kingdom expressed its reservations about any part of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development or the program of action which runs counter or is incompatible with Islamic Shari'ah, its values and customs, and said that it will not commit itself to the implementation or enforcement of such a part."

The minister also pointed out that the declaration issued by the summit emphasized several points, including the importance of international cooperation through bilateral agreements, and that there is no need to seek new financial mechanisms, such as funds and banks. The declaration also stressed the need to provide educational opportunities at all levels, focus on the need to achieve social cohesion, and provide the necessary health care to every member of society.

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Chief of French Interests Section Assumes Post

JN1603210595 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, culture and information minister, today received Jean-Francois Nodinot, who assumed his post as chief of the French interests section in Baghdad.

Foreign Minister Reacts to Albright Speech

JN1603162795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1427 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—Commenting on a speech by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright during the informal deliberations at the Monday, 13 March, Security Council review of the embargo imposed on Iraq, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf has stated the following to INA:

The U.S. ambassador claimed that the U.S. Government is interested in ending the suffering of the Iraqi people—which its government is causing. Therefore, the Americans are willing to be flexible about reconsidering the regime set forth by Resolutions 706 and 712, concerning selling Iraqi oil in return for so-called humanitarian and food supplies.

The foreign minister added: The U.S. ambassador deliberately avoided describing the nature of Resolutions 706 and 712 issued in 1991. Why, then, did it take five years for the conscience of the U.S. Government and Ambassador Albright to awaken? Are they now announcing their willingness to reconsider these two resolutions, and possibly amend them? Was the unfair embargo not imposed on Iraq in 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994? Has the United States not been the primary cause of the continuation of the unfair embargo against Iraq and the Iraqi people throughout these years?

The foreign minister asked: Why does the United States refuse to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which stipulates lifting the embargo on exporting Iraqi oil and other Iraqi commodities and materials? Why does the United States also want to revive Resolutions 706 and 712?

He said these legitimate questions call for explanations for our people and the international community. They also urge us to say that we—regardless of the allegations made by the U.S. ambassador that the suffering imposed on the Iraqi people is caused by their government and not the United States, which is employing all forms of pressures on the Security Council to obstruct the lifting of the unjsut siege—say to the U.S. ambassador that the people are aware of the facts and do not need anyone to teach them. They are not narrow-minded people who live as hostages to the complexes of the past.

He explained that the courageous Iraqi people are always prepared to deal even with their enemies on an equal footing and in accordance with the principles and the values of humanity and dignity inherited from their good ancestors; their great forefathers.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf added that the Iraqi people are well aware of everything that is designed and planned by their enemies who seek to distract the attention of the Security Council and the international community—as the U.S. ambassador sought to do in her speech at the Security Council when she tried to act like a nun and attempted to deceive the council members by dressing up Resolutions 706 and 712.

He said the Security Council's commitment toward Iraq's rights is clear in accordance with Resolution 687 which says, in Paragraph 22, that if Iraq, in cooperation with the Security Council's Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency, fulfills the requirements of Section C of the Resolution 687, which is the section that deals with the so-called weapons of mass destruction and removing these weapons and equipment and machines that can manufacture them, then the Security Council will lift the embargo imposed on exporting oil and other Iraqi commodities and all financial dealings related to them.

Al-Sahhaf added: Iraq has actually met all the requirements enshrined in Section C, which addresses the so-called mass destruction weapons, particularly the basic requirements. Therefore, the Security Council must shortly fulfill its commitments toward Iraq and the Iraqi people by lifting the ban on exporting Iraqi oil and other Iraqi commodities and materials in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

Al-Sahhaf went on to say: The person who is speaking of good faith and seeks to work and deal with Iraq on the basis of a legal interpretation of Security Council Resolution 687, particularly Paragraph 22 of the said resolution, must not lay a new trap for Iraq to rob it of its inalienable right to pursue economic development independently and establish its economic and trade relations with various world states on the basis of the rules observed by free and independent states. In the same vein, such a person must not try to rob Iraq of its clear rights, which are enshrined in Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

The foreign minister said: The Security Council now has an adequately clear picture regarding the situation. This clear picture confirms that Iraq has complied with Resolution 687 and fulfilled all its commitments. Consequently, the Security Council must fulfill its commitments by lifting the unfair sanctions clamped on Iraq in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

With regard to the reasons that prompted the Americans to renew interest in Resolutions 706 and 712 at present, Muhammad Sa'id al- Sahhaf said that the aforementioned resolutions were issued in frenzied and tense climates fraught with anti-Iraqi hostility in 1991. He added that the text of the two resolutions robs Iraq of its

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political authority and grants this authority to a group of foreign individuals and UN agencies. These two resolutions, he noted, view Iraq as a "protectorate" or a refugee camp managed and dominated by foreign powers; and this runs counter to the most basic articles and provisions enshrined in the UN Charter. Similarly, this goes against the text of Resolution 687 itself, which underscores respect for Iraq's sovereignty.

The Iraqi foreign minister said that by issuing these two resolutions in 1991 the United States and some of its allies sought to interfere in Iraq's affairs, and to destabilize its domestic affairs after they failed to do so in the 30-state military aggression.

Al-Sahhaf said: Resolution 706 says it is valid for only six months, and we are now in 1995, and we have fulfilled all the conditions set in Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 which calls for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq. Therefore, Resolutions 706 and 712 are no longer valid or subjects for discussion.

The foreign minister said that the trap the Americans want to set for Iraq and the UN Security Council, as well through the rediscussion of Resolutions 706 and 712 is to have the UN Security Council turn its attention from Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, an issue which safeguards the right of Iraq and its people, to an issue with many enslavement restrictions that deprive Iraq of its freedom, independence, and sovereignty.

Al-Sahhaf said that the amendment or the reformulation of Resolutions 706 and 712 will maintain several conditions which interfere in Iraq's affairs and which constitute a serious precedent for harming Iraq's independence and sovereignty. He added that Ambassador Albright's speech substantiates what we are saying because the Americans want—through the rediscussion of the referent resolutions—to establish a precedent that they will seek to impose as a new condition for implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. Such an illegal endeavor fully violates the text of this paragraph.

Concluding his statement to INA, the foreign minister said that the U.S. attempt to divert the UN Security Council's attention from the issue of lifting the embargo on Iraq—in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687—to the issue of the rediscussion of Resolutions 706 and 712, has been exposed.

He added: Most UN Security Council members are aware of this reality and focus their attention on lifting the embargo on Iraq in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. He said: We call on the United States to refrain from obstructing the work of the UN Security Council which is inclined to fulfill its obligations to Iraq by lifting the embargo imposed on it since Iraq, for its part, has carried out its obligations under Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

PUK Claims Saddam's Son Seriously Injured by Gunfire

LD1603171495 Tehran IRNA in English 1651 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj (Kordestan Prov.), March, 16, IRNA—Saddam Husayn's elder son 'Udayy and Iraqi Minister of Defense General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, have escaped assassination attempts in the past 48 hours, radio of Iraq's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said on Thursday [16 March]. 'Udayy was seriously injured when unidentified gunmen opened automatic fire, said the radio. He was rushed to the presidential hospital in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, it added.

In another incident, the radio said, the Iraqi minister of defense was targeted by an Iraqi soldier in one of the escorting cars while al-Majid was visiting the northern city of Karkuk.

General 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, who is a son-in-law of Saddam was not hurt but a number of his guards were killed in the attack, PUK radio claimed. It said Baghdad is in the grip of utmost tension, and clashes were reported in some parts of the city.

Military and security forces in Baghdad have been on the alert but, the radio said, they could not prevent fierce clashes between guards and dissidents which took place around the presidential palace. The PUK claim of assassination attempts as well as the clashes in Baghdad could not be independently confirmed.

Al-Samarra'i Promises Anti-Regime Operations

MM1703153195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Iraqi Opposition Preparing for Two Operations in Karkuk"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, told AL-HAYAH over the telephone yesterday that "the national forces" belonging to the opposition "will carry out two military operations tonight somewhere in Iraq against the regime's forces, and you will hear the news about them tomorrow, Friday, God willing. He added: "We will expand operations in the coming days."

Al-Samarra'i stressed that he was speaking from "an operations room outside Karkuk, only 50 km from the city center."

He stressed that the operations carried out recently against President Saddam Husayn's forces "are completely Iraqi, and no foreign party played a role in them."

He "strongly" denied the existence of "Kurdish intentions to occupy Karkuk. There are Iraqi efforts, namely

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Kurdish-Arab-Sunni-Shiite efforts, aimed against the dictatorial regime in Baghdad. And we are determined to continue them."

He added that the operations are carried out by the "national forces" belonging to the Unified Iraqi National Congress, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (led by Jalal Talabani), plus "other forces." He said that these forces achieved "brilliant successes" in the framework of "the preparations for a major operation against the dictatorial regime."

He stressed that recent battles resulted in "the 38th Infantry Division, the Maghawir Brigade, and three artillery battalions being scattered, in addition to a tank battalion and a mechanized infantry battalion, putting them out of the battle. And we freed some 450 officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers. And we seized large quantities of heavy, medium, and light weapons."

Asked how this information can be ascertained, al-Samarra'i said that "the proof is the existence of these quantities of weapons, and the military elements who have joined us. And press reporters can meet them. We also invite them to accompany us during our operations." He pointed out that "our forces' morale is high, and the operations we have carried out prove that the Iraqi forces are not prepared to fight for the sake of Saddam."

He went on to say that the Iraqi authorities "have over the past days emptied Karkuk of official documents and records and war materiel, and they tried to recruit some Arab tribes in Salah al-Din Governorate (whose capital is Tikrit), but their response was very weak." He said that Karkuk Governor Staff Lieutenant General 'Abd-al-Wahid Shanan asked the administrative official in charge of Kaor (adjacent to Irbil Governorate) "to approach the tribes, but they refuse to cooperate with the regime."

Says Opposition 'Master Plan' Changed

LD1703110995 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Wafiq al-Samarra'i, the former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, who has joined the Iraqi opposition, has denied that his plot to topple the Iraqi regime has failed or has been foiled. He reiterated his determination to deliver Iraq from the current regime.

Major General al-Samarra'i added that the news reports which claim that the Iraqi authorities foiled his attempted coup are not true. The truth is that large-scale operations, which were due to be carried out inside Iraq, have been postponed for various reasons.

The former chief of Iraqi military intelligence pointed out, in a telephone interview with Kuwaiti News agency KUNA in London, that changes have been introduced to the master plan of engagement on how to bolster resistance to the Iraqi regime. However, he declined to furnish the reasons behind such changes.

Nevertheless, he pointed out that an agreement has been reached that the large-scale operations should be preceded by a preliminary phase.

Al-Samarra'i insisted that the Iraqi opposition forces are currently carrying out military operations within the framework of the preliminary phase. They began on 14 March, and their outcome has so far been in favor of the forces of the opposition.

Al-Samarra'i disclosed that two important military operations will be carried out very soon in two different spots inside Iraq, pledging that the operations will continue in order to prepare the grounds for carrying out a large-scale operation to topple the dictatorial regime in Baghdad.

Opposition Radio: Time Not Right for Anti-Saddam Move

NC1603183095 (Clandestine) Iraqi Army Radio in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Unscheduled announcement]

[FBIS Translated Text] At these difficult times through which our Iraq is passing and the tragic circumstances the sons of our beloved country are experiencing, we proudly announce that some brothers have been urging us—the sons of the brave armed forces—to move and strike at the cells of treason represented by criminal Saddam and his treasonous family. We are proud with such appeals, which urge us to move, because the move of our brave army represents the crucial factor in toppling criminal Saddam.

However, we would like to say that we in the armed forces view matters from a more clear and accurate angle and that our move is contingent on our assessment and circumstances. We will inform the sons of our beloved Iraq when the time comes for our move. The circumstances through which our country is passing is extremely critical, both on the internal and external levels. There are essential prerequisites, however, for the move, which has become imminent. We are confident that the sons of our great Iraqi people will join forces with us to eliminate criminal Saddam and his treasonous family.

At this critical time, we urge our brother fighters in the army to monitor the members of the Saddam's family in their operational sectors as well as those elements linked to Saddam and his family. You are urged to monitor their moves, activities, statements, and conditions. The day of salvation is imminent, and the unity of the army and people is the crucial and definite factor that will eliminate criminal Saddam and his filthy family and bury them in the dustbin of history and [words indistinct].

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Opposition Reportedly Engage Government Forces

INC Forces Attack Army Units

LD1603175195 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in English 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Irbil, Iraq (15 March)—An IBC [Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation] correspondent reports that forces loyal to the INC [Iraqi National Congress] attacked the first battalion of the [Iraqi Army] 130th brigade in the early hours of 15th March. Over 60 soldiers and officers, including five battalion officers, joined the INC.

The attacking force captured 140 rifles, 7 mortars of 120mm and 82 mm, one SPG9 anti-tank weapon and 3 heavy machine guns. In addition, 3 vehicles, 2 generators and a large quantity of military supplies and stores were captured. The action took place in the Alton Kopri [as received] sector.

This action is part of the continuing campaign of military action against the regime of Saddam Husayn. Officers loyal to the INC report that Iraqi army officers are unwilling to fight for Saddam's regime and look for opportunities to join the opposition.

In another development, Iraqi army officers who have joined the INC say that Saddam's defence minister and cousin, 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, went to Debecka, the site of a major action earlier in the week. He punished those officers who were leading units which joined forces loyal to the INC. He arrested officers of the 38th division, some of whom were sentenced to death for giving up their positions.

'100 Iraqi Army Elements' Said Killed

MM1603161095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 95 p 4

[Report by 'Adnan Husayn: "100 Iraqi Army Elements Killed and 60 Taken Prisoner in Kurdish Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—In the latest statement on the current clashes between the Iraqi Government's forces and the opposition forces in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq sources of the Iraqi National Congress [INC] said yesterday that the opposition forces killed 100 members of the Iraqi Army in an attack on the headquarters of an Army regiment at flash points on the lines separating the government's forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga forces. The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] led by Mas'ud Barzani has meanwhile criticized these clashes, which started at the beginning of this month, because the decision on these clashes was made without reference to the local Kurdish parliament and the INC higher authorities.

The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, which is attached to the INC, said in a report released yesterday that "INC forces have taken full control of the headquarters of the 1st Regiment of the 130th Brigade after a lightning sweeping attack." It did not give the date and location of the attack, but Kurdish sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that it took place the night before last on the outskirts of Qush Tapah south of Irbil on the Kirkuk road.

The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation added that in the attack "100 of the regime's mercenaries were killed and 60 officers and soldiers joined our forces," including Staff Major 'Abd-al-Husayn Muwalli Salman, the regiment's commander who hails from Baghdad, Captain Muhammad Lami' Ibrahim from Kirkuk, Captain Diya' Jasim Muhammad from Baghdad, First Lieutenant 'Abd Khalaf Hammud al-Juburi from al-Sharqat, and First Lieutenant 'Ali Taha from Sangar. It also said that the attacking forces seized 13 mortar pieces and some quantities of military equipment and ammunition.

Several clashes have taken place over the past two weeks between government forces and forces of the INC and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, but the KDP (Barzani's) forces have kept out of these clashes, which occurred in the area between Irbil and Kirkuk.

Regime's Forces Said Shelling Villages

NC1603155795 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The 'Aflaqite regime's forces are currently using heavy artillery to bombard the villages and areas in (Bushava) following the regime's utter defeats inflicted by the hero peshmerga fighters and the Iraqi opposition forces.

Opposition Sources 'Surprised' by Turkish 'Warning'

MM1603170995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Zuhayr Qusaybati and Raghidah Dirgham: "Ekeus Pessimistic After His Meeting With Tariq 'Aziz"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, New York—Turkey yesterday warned the Kurds not to "provoke" Iraqi forces or to try to capture the oil-rich Karkuk. [passage omitted]

This is regarded as an implied warning to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK](led by Jalal Talabani), whose forces have been engaged in confrontations with the Iraqi Army for the past two weeks.

In London, commenting on the Turkish statement, a spokesman for the PUK told AL-HAYAH that "the ongoing clashes between Iraqi opposition forces and Baghdad forces are merely defensive operations on the opposition's part. They are imposed on the safe haven by Iraqi forces' deployments, their continued attacks on Kurdish cities and villages, and their attempts to disrupt the region's security and its people's safety."

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In a statement to AL-HAYAH a high-ranking source from the Unified Iraqi National Congress said he "is very surprised" by the Turkish position, because opposition forces are "defending themselves." The source also said that "the aims of the congress and all Iraqi opposition parties include liberating all Iraq's cities from the regime's domination. And that liberating any Iraqi city—Karkuk or any other city—is an internal Iraqi affair, the aim being to reinforce Iraq's unity and weaken the regime in Baghdad, which is directly responsible for abandoning Iraq's unity and sovereignty. The source added that "the Turkish brothers know that full well." The source expressed hope that "Turkey will stand by the Iraqi people and their struggling forces fighting against dictatorship." [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Rolf Ekeus [head of the UN special committee entrusted with dismantling Iraqi mass-destruction weapons] has told AL-HAYAH in New York that "only facts will dictate the essence of the report [on Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions]. We will pay no attention to the external efforts aimed at influencing the report." He stressed that Iraq continues to conceal information, especially with regard to biological weapons. He appeared pessimistic after his second meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz in New York the day before yesterday.

Ekeus pointed out that he has defined the formula that will enable Iraq to respond to all requirements concerning the biological weapons question. He said that the Iraqis "can—if they want to - - hand over everything before the report is issued." He left the impression that he is convinced that the Iraqis continue to conceal information and "to tamper"—"skillfully"—with the facts. He said that 'Aziz stressed to him the intention to clarify all aspects and to cooperate fully to resolve this issue when Ekeus visits Baghdad on 24 March. Ekeus revealed his intention to visit Kuwait after Baghdad. He stressed that the special committee did not draft Clause 22 of Resolution 687, and that political decisions are taken by the Security Council. He said that the council's members have agreed that the special committee's reports will have decisive influence in their decisions, but "they are free" to take whatever political decisions they wish. [passage omitted]

Kurdish Party Calls For Revolting Against 'Agents'

NC1603191995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1855 GMT 16 Mar 93

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—The Kurdistan Democratic Party has called for pouncing on the dens of agents and traitors in Kurdistan and revolting against them to purge the region of their filth.

In a statement issued here today to commemorate the historic March Statement and Nawruz, the party said that these mercenaries and their associates have started to dominate the lives of the Kurdish people in accordance with a criminal scheme engineered by the Zionists and Americans to reduce Iraq's Kurdistan to ruins and incite internal strife among the sons of the Kurdish people to oblige the malicious foreigners.

The statement added that the region's accomplishments disappointed imperialism and its agents and made them sense the dangers involved. Hence, the statement added, they try to sow sedition and obstruct the wheel of Iraq's towering construction, using the exceptional conditions the country is going through.

Army Said To Attack Southern Villages 'Last Week'

NC1603170895 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tyrant Saddam's forces, made up of units from the 47th Brigade and the 6th Armored Division, last week launched a brutal attack against several villages in (al-Mudaynah) District in al-Basrah Governorate.

Our sources said the attack targeted the villages of (Nahr 'Antar), (al-Ghurayj), (al-Zurayji), (al-Ghunayj), and (Umm al-Shuwaysh). The regime's forces fired indiscrimately at inhabitants, burned houses, and arrested many citizens. Our sources said 15 houses were set on fire and 10 citizens were arrested in (Umm al-Shuwaysh), while the (al-Khunud) area was destroyed by the tyrant's forces. [passage omitted]

Army Reinforcements Reported in al-Basrah

NC1603175195 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last week, our sources in southern Iraq monitored four military divisions being sent by tyrant Saddam as reinforcements for his forces in the Governorates of al-Basrah and al-Nasiriyah.

Our sources say the 1st Mechanized Division and 10th Armored Division are currently deployed in the (Sirdahiyah) area in al-Basrah Governorate. The 6th Armored Division is deployed in (al-Mudaynah) district, while the 11th Division is deployed from (al-Fuhud), al-Hammar up to Suq al-Shuyukh district in al-Nasiriyah Governorate.

Our sources say these forces are on alert. Hundreds of trucks are moving equipment and ammunition to them from Baghdad across the central and southern governorates, especially the Governorates of al-Diwaniyah, al-Hullah, al-Kut, and Samawah.

Dissidents Claim To Find, Free Kuwaiti Prisoners

NC1603155595 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The regime has built a new secret prison near a car park in al-Nasiriyah. Informed source say the prison's gate lies within the compound of the

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al-Nasiriyah Security Directorate. A large number of Iraqi citizens are kept in this prison, which does not meet with proper health codes.

Saddam's regime has increased the number of secret prisons in the various Iraqi Governorates. The uprising's fighters have found many of these prisons and released the detainees, who included some Kuwaiti prisoners.

Party Member Survives 1994 'Assassination Attempt'

JN1603114995 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 2 Mar 95 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] On 20 December 1994, comrade Muhammad Jasim Khanjar, secretary of the party group in al-Karamah, Dhi Qar Governorate, was wounded in an assassination attempt. A group of youths from al-Nasir Subdistrict Council took him to Saddam General Hospital, where the youths named below donated six bottles of blood for his treatment.

The youths are: Husayn Sawadi Zahir, 'Udayy Husayn 'Ulayj, Husayn Ni'mah Raddad, 'Ammar Humayd Jallab, Tha'ir Muhammad Jasim, and Husayn Jabbar Khalaf.

Paper Views U.S. 'Conspiratorial' Conduct

JN1703092895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0840 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—AL-THAWRAH newspaper has said that Christopher's announcement that the plot hatched by his administration failed adds nothing new. It is only a fresh acknowledgement of the U.S. conspiratorial conduct toward Iraq.

In an article today, AL-THAWRAH adds: Washington has acknowledged the conspiracy and spoken about the failure of its tools in achieving the objectives set for them. For its part, Iraq was not heedless of what was being planned. It was watching developments carefully. It then adopted measures calmly and wisely to deny the agent tools a chance to perform the roles assigned to them by the U.S. Administration.

The paper highlights a statement by Ferhat Osman, spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry, who denounced attempts to provoke our military units near the city of Chamchamal by the group of agent Jalal Talabani. Apparently, those attempts were a basic part of the failed plot which Christopher spoke about during his recent meeting with [Saudi King] Fahd.

AL-THAWRAH says Iraq was not waiting for THE NEW YORK TIMES to uncover the plot, because Iraq had earlier discovered the plot and taken precautions. This plot is not the first, nor will it be the last, in the declared hostile U.S. stand toward Iraq.

The paper concludes: History shall bear witness that Iraq is stronger than its enemies and that its ranks are not so weak that they can be easily penetrated. The unity and cohesion of its people, under the aegis of President Saddam Husayn, shall serve as a beacon for mighty nations in their hard struggle to thwart the plots of colonialist hegemony and domination.

Paper Denounces 'Escalating Iranian Encroachments'

JN1603102495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0720 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has denounced the criminal conduct of the Iranian regime, as well as its ambitions and its grudge against Iraq and its people.

Commenting on the escalating Iranian encroachments on Iraq and its sovereignty, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says in an article today that Tehran is showing its teeth, but has again deluded itself into believing it can accomplish what it failed to achieve throughout eight years of a war it lost.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Iraq's brave sons and their valiant Armed Forces purged the homeland of Iranian filth, and chased and defeated their remnants. However, the Iranians' allegations, falsehoods, and vituperations still coincide with the tune played by Washington and its henchmen in order to make trouble, disseminate rumors, and interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

The paper points to the Tehran rulers' attitudes, which survive through infiltration and provocation. Meanwhile, the frenzy of U.S. intelligence circles is escalating, accompanied by a tune threatening to keep the blockade against Iraq. AL-THAWRAH explains that mobilizing the agents and henchmen in the region, which coincides with the U.S. threats, definitely reveals the fact that Tehran is once again presenting its credentials to the greater Satan as a ready agent that can accomplish what others failed to achieve.

Concluding its article, AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that Iraq's eyes are open and that Iraq is waylaying anyone who thinks of encroaching on its territory and sovereignty.

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Rabin Says Willing To Take Risks for Peace

TA1603184895 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said today that he is willing to take risks for peace despite the fact that many Israelis believe that the risks are too great. Rabin made the remarks to the speaker of the upper chamber of the German parliament and asked him to relay the message to the Syrian president, whom he will meet in the coming days.

Talks With Syrians Said Stuck on 'Equality' Concept

TA1603155095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Mar 95 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben, Gay Bekhor, Or Kashti, and Yehudit Winkler]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel suggested to Syria new wording of the aim of the discussion on security arrangements within the framework of the peace negotiations. The Israeli formula, which Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin presented to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, includes the concept "equality," but only as a general term referring to the rights of both sides to security, and with the explicit condition that the implementation of the security arrangement is adapted to the conditions on the ground and is not identical on the two sides of the border.

The Syrians demanded that Israel agree specifically to the principle of "equality" [last word in English] as the main aim of the security arrangements during peace. They expressed a readiness to adapt the implementation to the conditions on the ground, but demanded "parity of means" [zehut be'emtza'im]. According to their proposal, if the depth of the demilitarized area on the Syrian side is larger than on the Israeli side because of the conditions on the ground, such as in the Sea of Galilee area, Syria will receive "automatic compensation" in a different aspect of the security arrangements. Rabin rejected the Syrian demand.

Rabin told the Labor ministerial forum last night that in talks with Christopher, the Syrians were not looking merely for reciprocity but also equality. "We said that under such geographic conditions, we will not permit equality under any terms. Everything was in general terms and did not deal with substance," the prime minister said. He said Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' found it difficult to convince President Hafiz al-Asad to accept the formulas presented by the Americans.

When asked whether a breakthrough was reached during the Christopher, Rabin replied: "Everything in life is relative." He said that the talks with Syria will be renewed in another week or two.

"The Americans did not bring proposals with them, as has been reported. They are transferring messages," Rabin said. Christopher said during the visit that the United States is not making do with transferring messages between the sides, "but also helping them in understanding the possibilities and in suggesting new directions."

The dispute over the principle of equality has in recent weeks been the focus of the negotiations between Syria and Israel under U.S. mediation. Israel agreed over two years ago that there would be "mutuality" in security arrangements, and the draft declaration of principles worked out in the talks in Washington said that each side recognizes the security needs of the other side. The Syrians, however, demand equality in security arrangements, to which Israel is opposed.

In the talks between Ambassadors Itamar Rabinovich and Walid al- Mu'allim it was decided that the discussion on security arrangements will be held in three areas: aims, principles, and implementation. Rabinovich and al-Mu'allim focused on defining the aims in relation to the Syrian demand for wording that would include the term "equality." Al-Mu'allim explained in a closed meeting: "We are trying to define equality in a way that will permit each side to present an achievement based on its policy, so that Syria will achieve an equal agreement [heskem shave], but Israel will avoid equal implementation [timana meyisum shave].

The current security arrangements on the Golan Heights, according to the 1974 disengagement of forces agreement, are identical on the Israeli and Syrian sides. Israel claims that that can be justified when both sides enjoy similar topographic conditions.

Former Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq offered his Syrian counterpart in their December 1994 meeting that demilitarization on the Syrian side be nine times that on the Israeli side, a formula based on the relative sizes of the two countries.

Syria made it clear yesterday that it would oppose an American proposal to renew the chiefs of staff meetings soon. A Syrian source said that Damascus would first want to see substantial progress in the negotiations to be conducted by the ambassadors in Washington. The Syrian source said that Damascus opposes bypassing "the negotiating basis." In other words, it opposes an Israeli declaration about a withdrawal from the Golan in negotiations discussing security arrangements.

"We will oppose the meetings of the chiefs of staff so that last December's effort is not repeated," the source said, referring to the December meeting between the Israeli and Syrian chiefs of staff. In a very short meeting, Baraq suggested security arrangements to the Syrians, who quickly suspended the negotiations.

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In several interviews in Germany yesterday, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said that Israel would be prepared for a Golan Heights withdrawal in return for security arrangements that compensate it for the loss of the territory.

Peres noted that in an era of ballistic missiles territory is unimportant "just as strategic depth cannot prevent knifings."

Minister Yosi Sarid said yesterday that the negotiations with Syria are being conducted "while in the background there is a plan, which I am not authorized to speak about, for a very difficult withdrawal." In a lecture to Meretz activists at Tel Aviv University, Sarid said. "The depth of the withdrawal will be on a par with the depth of the peace. I suggest you complete for yourselves the equation "Full peace in return for...."

He noted that the expectations from the al-Asad-Christopher meeting were only partially fulfilled. "The Syrians are not an easy customer," Sarid said. "But we are also not easy. If I were to make an intelligent assessment of the situation, then I would say I am far from pessimistic about reaching an agreement with Syria in 1995."

Goals of Security Arrangements With Syria Detailed

TA1603172895 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Mar 95 p B1

[Commentary by Ze'ev Schiff: "The Main Goals of Security Arrangements"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Were Israel to face a choice tomorrow between effective security arrangements on the Golan Heights and quick normalization between Israel and Syria—with an embassy in Damascus, an Israeli flag hoisted over it, and Israeli tourists crowding the Damascus Bazaar—I have no doubt as to what I would choose. The Israeli flag can wait, and no harm will be done if the Israelis are exposed to the Syrian antiquities in another two to three years. Important as these things may be, they are merely symbols. When it comes to our relations with Syria, especially if we get off the Golan Heights, it is much more important to introduce serious security arrangements. They would be more stable and permanent assets for Israel.

Israel is not disturbed by its future trade ties with Syria. The main issue that should preoccupy us is whether Israel would be able to tell itself, after having paid the heavy price of evacuating the Golan Heights and its settlements, that its strategic and military situation has not deteriorated in the wake of the new peace: The military aspect is the immediate situation on the Golan and the strategic aspect concerns Israel's dealing with the bulk of relations with the Arab world and with all the threats against it. When the people face the referendum, as promised, this would be the main consideration for many. The correct question the people should be asked must deal with all the elements of peace and security in the agreement, not the meaningless question presented in the newspaper polls: Would you be willing to cede the Golan for peace? The Israeli negotiating team will have to struggle over these elements and details of the security arrangements, and it will be difficult. If we fail to attain the main elements of the security arrangement, paying the high price the Syrians are asking would be questionable. Such a negative formula will most certainly cause a rift in the nation, which would raise the price of withdrawal.

Two main goals should be on Israel's mind in the security arrangements: One, to reduce to a minimum the threat of a sudden attack against Israel, if and when it withdraws from the Golan. Ideally, we should seek a situation in which the probability of a surprise attack is lower than it is today, when we are on the Golan. The damage a war might cause, if it breaks out, should be minimized as well. The second aim is securing the water resources and reservoirs. My impression from the talks with the Syrians so far is that not enough weight is being given to the second goal. Defending the water resources is, for some reason, low on our priority list, which is a mistake. The water resources and reservoirs (the Sea of Galilee) are a clear strategic interest—more than the number of tanks and guns that could be stationed in the demilitarized zones.

Another goal, essentially strategic, is not directly connected with the Golan Heights. Peace with Syria could bring about a true strategic shift. If it is attained, Israel will have succeeded in making peace with all of its neighboring countries. A barrier would be created between it and the external and more dangerous ring of countries such as Iran and Iraq. Saudi Arabia would find it easier to join the peace process and Hizballah, for example, would become a marginal element. This important goal should not be disregarded.

So far, no practical discussions have been held on security arrangements. The parties have only presented their opening stands. During Warren Christopher's recent visit to the region, the U.S. peace team for the first time met Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq. It is known that the team held a meeting in Washington with former Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq. It can be said to Shahaq's credit that he treats the security arrangements issue in security terms alone. On this sensitive issue, he has no other considerations, personal or ideological. The Americans are well versed in the security issue and in Israel's stands. In their strong desire to succeed in their mediation efforts, the Americans would most probably like to identify Israel's acceptable withdrawal positions in the negotiations on the security arrangements. For example, Israel's willingness to accept alternatives for some security arrangements. The Israelis must remember that although the negotiations are held with Syria, exchanging views with the Americans could be considered preliminary negotiations.

The security arrangements must be seen as a complex package of issues. The main elements are: lines and

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stages of withdrawal; border adjustments; demilitarization—the equipment to which it will apply and the size of territory on both sides of the border; warning stations—who will man them and for how long; structure of armies—their size and deployment; supervision of the agreement and foreign forces. It is important to find the balance between the various elements. If a concession is made on one element, how is it compensated for in another. And, naturally, we must not forget that water issues should be part of the security arrangement. In 1967, they were casus belli.

Netanyahu: Public Does Not Support Golan Withdrawal

TA1503133595 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 15 Mar 95 p 2

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Likud will next week call for early elections and the dissolution of the Knesset, party leader Binyamin Netanyahu announced yesterday.

Netanyahu was addressing an emergency meeting by the heads of the opposition factions and Golan Heights residents following statements by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres about the Golan Heights.

The opposition and Golan Heights residents will launch a massive public awareness campaign to thwart the government's plans for withdrawal, Netanyahu said.

[Writing on the same page, David Rudge adds: "The Golan Heights Residents Committee has drawn up action plans aimed at intensifying the campaign to keep the region under Israeli rule, in the event of a breakthrough in the U.S.-brokered talks between Israel and Syria.

["Committee members held an emergency session in Qatzrin yesterday to coordinate the program and later some of them traveled to the Knesset to meet with opposition leaders.

["No details of the action campaign were released to the press in order to maintain the element of surprise, although it was clear that the program would be designed to build on what they described as the public consensus against withdrawal.

["Committee leaders stressed that development of the region and boosting settlement would continue at full pace. They also noted that this year the government intended to spend around NIS [new Israeli shekels] 100 million on developing and improving roads, tourist sites and infrastructure—about the same amount as last year."]

"All the talk about security arrangements on the Golan Heights are an illusion. The Golan Heights themselves provide security on the Golan," Netanyahu said. "Peres said that Israel is threatened by 1,000 missiles and that the Golan is not a shield against these missiles. This means that the Golan is not needed by Israel for security reasons, and therefore can be given away. The government is signaling that it intends giving away all the Golan Heights. (Syrian President Hafiz) al-Asad knows this.

"The government has no mandate for this policy. And Rabin has no mandate to conduct negotiations on withdrawing from the Golan. The government's policy is not supported by the majority of the people.

"If Rabin had asked in his election campaign for a mandate to negotiate on the Golan, he wouldn't have received it. The opposition is therefore demanding that Rabin return to the electorate," Netanyahu said. "(Rabin's) belief that giving away the Golan will bring him electoral victory is unfounded."

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 15 March publishes on page 2 a related report by Menahem Rahat which adds: "Netanyahu noted that there can be no security arrangement with Syria without remaining on the Golan. He announced that the Likud will not implement any other agreement if it wins the elections. 'The problem is that this government is preparing international and Arab public opinion for Israel's concession of the Golan, whereas the next government will adopt a different line and will announce that such a thing will never happen. It would be best if the country were spared this and elections were held now.'

["Netanyahu believes that 'the government is racing into al-Asad's arms' because it fears it will lose the elections due to the corruption scandals in the Histadrut and the failure of its economic policies."]

Golan Tourism Project Receives Ministerial Approval

TA1603062195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Despite the uncertainty of Israel's future on the Golan Heights, the heads of Hammat Gader have decided to invest in developing the tourism site. With the authorization of the Tourism Ministry, work is to begin soon on building a youth hostel with 60 rooms. The Hammat Gader management is also investing $200,000 in building a large Thai restaurant. Roni Lotan, general manager of the resort, says Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am urged the resort management to go ahead with the development project. [passage omitted]

Study Proposes 'Special Majority' in Golan Referendum

TA1503141695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 15 Mar 95 p A2

[Report by party affairs correspondent Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Text] A new study asserts that the optimal referendum on the future of the Golan Heights

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should call for a special majority of 50 plus 1 percent of the eligible voters rather than of the actual voters.

The study conducted by the Shalem Center-Institute for National Policy, a think tank associated with the right wing, opposes a referendum that would determine the fate of the Golan Heights with a majority of at least 65 percent of the actual voters—the type of referendum demanded by many right-wing Knesset members [MK's] as well as Labor MK's who are members of the Golan lobby in the Knesset. On the other hand, the study opposes a referendum that would require a simple majority of half of the voters. Such a referendum has been proposed by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and is favored by most members of the coalition.

The study was conducted by Dr. Yoram Hazani, the director of the Shalem Center. He opposes a referendum requiring a majority of 65 percent of the actual vote, among other reasons, because such a requirement gives the impression of racism due to the correlation between the 15-percent difference and the proportionate percentage of Arabs in Israel's general population.

Dr. Hazani reviewed 31 examples of referendums held all around the world. He points out that referendums requiring a special majority of over 50 percent of the eligible voters have not been conducted anywhere in the democratic world in recent times. The only such examples in a modern democracy are the referendums held in New Zealand in 1908 and 1911 which required a 60-percent majority to ban the sale of alcoholic drinks. Hazani nevertheless points out that legislators in various democracies frequently demand a special majority of two thirds or three quarters to pass certain laws.

The researcher stresses that a special majority is increasingly being required in votes on constitutional issues around the world. A special majority was required in referendums held in recent years in France, Britain, and Spain just to endorse partial sovereignty changes.

Dr. Hazani believes that a decision to withdraw from the Golan based on a simple majority in a referendum is "a recipe for internal discord and social tension, similar to those caused by the war in Lebanon." He contends that a referendum with a special majority of over 50 percent of the eligible voters should be held on vital issues, such as a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. This would prevent such discord and tension by ensuring an arrangement in the Golan that is compatible with the traditional Israeli way of executing political changes, namely, building consensus around values vital to Israel's existence.

In Dr. Hazani's opinion, a one-time law on a referendum on the Golan is not enough. Prior to such a referendum the Knesset would have to legislate a basic law on referendums. In his opinion, the worst scenario would be to enact a one-time law "the specifics and nature of which are defined by what appears to be politically expedient at that particular moment." The researcher stresses that such a step would have a catastrophic impact, since any referendum held by the government in the future would be of a temporary nature and this would further enhance the powers of Israel's executive branch.

According to Hazani, a basic law on referendums would have to answer questions such as: What issues should be approved by referendums? Who has the authority to initiate and approve referendums, and who is entitled to vote in them? Who will control the phrasing of the questions, and who will decide the date of a referendum?

Hazani rejects the claim that the proposal for a special majority in a referendum on the future of the Golan would make negotiations with the Syrians impossible. "If the adoption of conventional and enduring democratic procedures by Israel 'torpedoes' the peace process, it is not democracy that should be blamed for it, but the negotiating partner unwilling to consider that it is negotiating a peace treaty with a democratic leader who must take public opinion into account," Hazani says.

JERUSALEM POST Resumes Publication in Egypt

TA1503121495 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 15 Mar 95 p 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE JERUSALEM POST has gone back on sale in Egypt, a month after it was banned by the Egyptian authorities.

No official reason was ever given for the POST's banning.

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Radio Cites VOA on U.S. Senate Debt Relief Vote

JN1703071995 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0530 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Voice of America radio has said that the U.S. Senate approved $275 million to finance a writeoff of Jordan's debts. The radio said the act was attached to a defense bill and passed by the Senate late last night. The U.S. House of Representatives must now approve the bill for Jordan's debt relief.

Paper: 'Fresh' U.S. Anti-Iraq 'Demands' Rejected

JN1603104695 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 16 Mar 95 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Jordan has turned down fresh American demands against Iraq, which are part of the frenzied campaign staged by the U.S. Administration against Iraq and the escalation of its accusations against Iraq, especially regarding political pluralism and human rights violations.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that the American demands came in light of the failure of the coup attempt planned by Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former director of Iraqi intelligence, who fled to the Kurdish areas in the north, and the early arrest of all those who were involved in the plot.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has also learned that the failure of the coup attempt astounded the CIA, which had reportedly planned for it carefully. The coup attempt comes in response to international endeavors to terminate Iraq's blockade. It was aimed at installing a pro-American regime in Iraq that would secure American oil needs and strategic requirements and which would also serve as a strong U.S. arm in the Arabian Gulf, especially in light of reports confirming that Iraq possesses the largest and finest world oil reserves.

A senior Jordanian official has confirmed that Jordan seeks to develop its relations with Iraq in preparation for the stage following the lifting of the blockade, given that Iraq is the only country that can absorb Jordan's unemployment and industrial products, thus helping in realizing great economic growth.

The senior official pointed out that Jordan is currently seeking to improve its relations with Arab states. He noted that Jordan is an advocate of spreading democracy, pluralism, and respect for human rights through peaceful means. He said Jordan observes the convictions of all countries and peoples surrounding it and that it will not impose its democratic model on anyone because each Arab country has its own conditions. He added that Jordan refuses to meddle in the internal affairs of Iraq or any other country.

Observers have noticed that the U.S. secretary of state stressed during his news conference that he discussed, during his talks in Amman, what he dubbed as dangers posed by Iraq on the region's states. He, however, did not talk about this in detail.

His Majesty King Husayn restated Jordan's compliance with UN resolutions, noting that the Iraqi oil sent to Amman is only in repayment of old-standing debts.

The U.S. pressures come at a time when Syria and Turkey decline to adhere to the blockade imposed against Iraq. Some 600 trucks cross the Iraqi-Turkish borders on a daily basis laden with foodstuffs, and they come back carrying Iraqi oil to the whole world.

Jordanian-Israeli Follow-up Committee Meets

JN1303201395 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Joint Jordanian-Israeli Follow-up Committee for implementing the peace treaty held a meeting in Dayr 'Alla at noon today under Dr. Hani al-Mulqi, head of the Jordanian side in the committee, and Elyaqim Rubinstein, head of the Israeli side.

The committee reviewed the meetings of the specialized committees, particularly the Trade and Transportation Committees. In addition to the meeting of the Follow-up Committee, the al- 'Aqabah-Elat Committee held a meeting in which Dr. Fayiz al- Khasawinah led the Jordanian side. The conferees agreed to hold a meeting for the committee in al-'Aqabah early next month in order to define the topics pertaining to its work in a way that will conform to the work of other specialized committees. These committees are concerned with issues which will be discussed by the al-'Aqabah-Elat committee.

The Water Committee has also held a meeting in Dayr 'Alla. It finalized the discussions on the line that will convey water from Lake Tiberias to the King 'Abdallah Canal.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Follow-up Committee on 23 March.

Nonproliferation Position Reportedly Undecided

JN1203190495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Ruba al-Husari in "occupied Jerusalem" and Salamah Ni'mat in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In Amman, Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said yesterday that Jordan has not yet decided whether to support the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or not.

In statements to AL-HAYAH, al-Kabariti said Jordan will not decide on this subject before reviewing the outcome of the Arab foreign ministers' meeting on 22 March in Cairo and the position of the Nonaligned Movement group.

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He said the final decision on the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty will be taken by King Husayn in light of Jordan's consultations with the Arab parties and the Nonaligned Movement.

The Jordanian minister's statements were made four days before the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Amman as part of his Middle East tour. Christopher is expected to seek to persuade Jordan to support a treaty extension, which has become a point of disagreement between Washington, Tel Aviv and Egypt.

Western diplomatic sources in Amman said the U.S. Administration is seeking to find a solution to the crisis and a way to avoid embarrassing Egypt, which has escalated its position toward the treaty more than is necessary despite Washington's understanding of Cairo's position.

The sources said Washington hopes Israel will agree to a proposal to contain the crisis and avoid any embarrassment to Egypt at this critical phase in the regional peace process.

AL-HAYAH Receives Permission To Publish

JN1703124895 Amman JORDAN TIMES (Weekender Supplement) in English 9 Mar 95 p A

[From the "Society on the Move" column]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] While conflicts continued on the local press front between tabloid publishers and the government, we learned that AL-HAYAH Arabic daily, published in several capitals abroad, has received the "roll the presses" permission to print from Amman. An informal request made last year culminated in the approval to publish from Jordan last month when the paper's editor- in-chief, Jihad al-Khazin was in Amman to interview His Majesty King Husayn. The initial request made to the King over a year ago is explained by AL-HAYAH sources as a courtesy. Back in the 1960s, then publisher Jamil Muruwah's mother took refuge in Jordan. At the time the paper, published out of Beirut, was considered pro-Jordanian and its publisher, Kamil Muruwah was assassinated by pro-Nassirite forces in 1966. Therefore King Husayn has had an affinity towards the paper to start with. Although in more recent year AL- HAYAH has more than occasionally been banned from circulation in Jordan, its readership here is significant. It sells about 1,000 copies even though it arrives a day late. That the paper is owned by Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan of Saudi Arabia has not prevented its banning in the peninsula as well. And that ownership is no negligible factor in the consideration of permitting the paper to publish out of Amman.

Meanwhile the journal has also received the approval to print from the Ministry of Information. The Jordanian authorities would prefer that AL-HAYAH be printed in the al-Zarqa' duty free zone as are several other papers. But the publishers are looking into the feasibility of contracting with the Jordan Press Foundation (JPF), the owners of AL-RA'Y and the JORDAN TIMES, which they say is better equipped to do the job and likely to offer reasonable rates for the service. AL-HAYAH's surveys of the target market, which comprises Jordan and Palestine, point to an initial printing of 5,000 copies daily. Sources say the current 200 fils news-stand cost of the paper (received now from Cairo) could be hiked when publishing starts from Amman. Accustomed to hi-tech printing facilities, the newspaper's administration is also exploring the possibility of installing a $500,000 machine at the JPF (if that is the site selected for printing) which would receive print films via satellite. Depending on the outcome of discussions on costs and financial arrangements, AL-HAYAH could be in business here in the next few months. It would be interesting to see what kind of competition with the local dailies the move would trigger. "Competition with Jordanian dailies, however, is not our goal," the newspaper sources maintain.

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Buwayz Comments on Christopher Tour

NC1703074995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi met Minister 'Abdallah al-Amin and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, who returned from Copenhagen, where he represented Lebanon at the international development summit.

In a statement at the airport, Buwayz said a new mechanism was proposed during U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour. He noted that Lebanon will benefit from any progress on the Syrian-Israeli track. He expressed his belief that speculation over the results of the prospective Syrian-Israeli dialogue on the ambassadorial level is premature. He said that in and of itself a meeting between Syrian and Israeli officials is important and gives rise to hope that the peace process is continuing and is not deadlocked.

Buwayz denied knowledge of an agreement between Israel and Christopher on lifting the naval blockade of Lebanon's south coast. He said that perhaps Secretary Christopher received a gesture on lifting the blockade while he was visiting the region.

Buwayz and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' have consulted over the latest developments.

Hizballah Radio on Attacks on Israeli Posts

NC1703080195 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Out of its desire to confirm its choice of struggling for liberation and defending our people and land, and out of its faithfulness to the blood of the martyrs who planted their bodies in Jabal 'Amil and western al-Biqa' to be [word indistinct] along the way to liberation, the Islamic Resistance, the Martyr Samir Milhim Company, carried out a concentrated and [word indistinct] attack on four posts belonging to the Zionist enemy and its Lahdist agents.

The Martyr 'Ali Murtada Group attacked the Taw'amat Niha post while the Martyr Yusuf Haydar Ahmad Group attacked the Kafr Hunah post. These attacks were accompanied by another by the Martyr Muhammad Sulayman Group on the Zummarayya crossing. At the same time the al-Ahmadiyah post came under concentrated attack from the Martyr Tawfiq [word indistinct] group.

The mujahidin clashed with the [word indistinct] at the posts, using machine guns and artillery. They took full control of the posts and isolated them. At the same time the fire support unit of the Islamic Resistance pounded the four posts and their fortifications in a concentrated and accurate manner, attacking them directly.

The Islamic Resistance promised its innocent people and martyrs to keep its promise of continuing its jihad until the liberation of the land and sanctities.

Israeli Blockade, Shelling, Overflights Reported

NC1703084095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli acts of aggression continued all last night. The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Tyre sent us the following dispatch a short while ago:

[Begin recording] Lebanese fishermen did not enjoyed fishing for long. Yesterday fishing boats returned to port after they came under fire from Israeli enemy gunboats. They also heard threats over loudspeakers not to sail out to sea. Israeli gunboats have been cruising in Lebanese territorial waters since last night. They approached the coast north and south of Tyre. They fired flares over the coast from al-Qulaylah up to al-Rashidiyah camp. The fishermen fear that the Israeli gunboats may impose the blockade for a long time, as they did earlier in February and March. [passage omitted]

Israeli helicopters flew over the villages adjacent to the occupied border strip in the western and central sectors and fired flares over the area. The Israeli enemy raked the woods and valleys adjacent to Qabrikha, Tallusah, Bra'shit, and Shaqra with machine guns. The enemy directed machine-gun fire from positions in al-Bayyad at the woods, valleys, and ridges adjacent to al-Mansuri and Majdal Zun at dawn today. [end recording]

Israeli gunboats fired in the direction of fishermen in the south to intimidate them. An Israeli gunboat captain insulted some fishermen for their solidarity with the call for strike on 14 March. The Israeli forces pounded areas in western and central sectors, western al-Biqa', Hasbayya, and Iqlim al-Tuffah. The Israeli aircraft staged mock raids over various areas in the south.

The resistance men retaliated by attacking enemy positions in Taw'amat Niha, Kawkaba, Kafr Huna, and Zummarayya. They also pounded enemy assembly points and artillery bunkers in the area. The Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for these attacks.

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Firm U.S. Stand on Israeli 'Obstruction' Urged

JN1703073095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH is the only newspaper to publish today. AL-BA'TH and TISHRIN are observing a holiday. AL-THAWRAH commentaries focus on the outcome of the tour of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, namely, the resumption of the Washington talks.

In a commentary under the headline "A Means and Not an End," the paper says: The important thing is not the resumption of the Washington talks and the reactivation of the peace process, which depends on the Syrian track. What is more important and necessary is that the rulers of Israel should be convinced that the time for peace has come and that they should delve into the deeper issues that relate to the essence of the conflict, settlement, and mechanism of implementation of the relevant international resolutions. The Israeli rulers should also abandon the mentality of arrogance and intransigence and the policy of bargains, maneuvers, blackmail, and separate deals. This policy has proven its failure and has brought nothing to the parties that subscribed to it save disappointment and serious predicaments.

AL-THAWRAH says for Syria, the negotiating process has never been an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to regain the usurped territory and return the usurped national and pan-Arab rights in full, in accordance with UN and Security Council resolutions. These resolutions are the basis and frame of reference of the Madrid conference, the peace process, and the U.S. initiative.

The paper highlights Israel's attempts at obstruction and deception. These attempts seek to derail the peace process, empty it of its content, evade the obligations of peace, and weasel out of any commitment to the land-for-peace principle.

AL-THAWRAH notes the Israeli statements that coincided with Secretary Christopher's tour of the region, saying that those statements were meant to confuse things and to deprive the mission of the chief of U.S. diplomacy of any success.

The paper concludes by reiterating Syria's constant and positive position on the peace process. Syria's constant principles to reach a solution have not changed. Syria's rights are not subject for blackmail, bargaining, and relinquishment. Syria has not yet run out of opportunities given to the U.S. Administration to play a firm and active role. This role should create practical formulas for the peace process, translate the resolutions of international legitimacy that return the Golan and southern Lebanon, and effect full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and its return to the 4 June 1967 lines.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: The efforts made to achieve peace over three and a half years have revealed Israel's true position and shown the threat of Israel's obstructionist policy to peace, whose foundations are well known to everybody and which cannot be bargained over or prejudiced. If peace is to see daylight in this sensitive and tense region of the world, it is time for the international community to tell Israel: Stop your obstruction. It is also time for the United States to adopt a firm and serious stand toward the Israeli obstruction of the peace process.

Syria has always demonstrated seriousness about peace and reiterated its commitment to its requirements, which are justice and comprehensiveness. While reasserting this position today and stressing its constant principles, Syria stresses at the same time that the essence—land and rights—cannot be prejudiced. This is because the essence remains so, and this position is irreversible. Everybody should know that Syria adheres to the foundations of peace and is totally willing to implement the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy. However, Syria wants this peace to be comprehensive and just and to preserve its national and pan-Arab principles.

The paper concludes: In the wake of Christopher's tour, we hope that the United States will play the role of the true sponsor and a full and honest partner in a practical manner, so that Israel will not—as is its habit—resort to maneuvers to obstruct the talks once again.

Damascus Radio: Resuming Talks 'Not End in Itself'

JN1603161095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] As U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher concluded his tour of the region, the international conviction about Syria's sincere quest for peace began to deepen. The world public is now certain that Syria wants peace from a position of strength. This strength comes from what Syria stands for: justice, self-confidence, and the resolutions of international legitimacy. The world public and the active international forces, which know this about Syria, also know that Israel prepared for the U.S. secretary of state's mission by escalating its aggression against, and siege of Lebanese ports and occupied Palestinian territories.

In spite of this, Yitzhaq Rabin, the head of the Israeli Government, has said there will be no peace with Syria without withdrawal. In addition, Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has announced that Israel is ready to pay the price of peace with Syria. These Israeli statements are neither clear nor specific and do not include any clear commitment to the Security Council resolutions. These statements are, therefore, far from a commitment to implementing these resolutions. Anyway,

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there is no guarantee that the Israeli officials will not go back on these statements by talking once again about partial and distorted solutions that create further tension and explosions.

Indeed, there is no guarantee that Israel will not return to the provocative statements by its officials about an Israeli test of Syria's intentions. Based on its old and new experience since the beginning of the peace process, Syria has the right to think about such possibilities. The international community and the co-sponsors of the peace process, especially the U.S. partner, have responsibilities to the peace process itself. Syria also has the right to reaffirm that resuming the negotiations is not an end in itself. The objective is to achieve a just peace. To achieve this objective, the resumption of the negotiations should be accompanied by intensive U.S. activity to change the rigid and intransigent Israeli position, which gives precedence to Israeli ambitions over justice and right. Thus, this Israeli position should turn into a new and different one that adheres to full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories to pre-4 June 1967 lines.

This is the foundation of a just peace that can be enhanced and consolidated by equal and balanced security guarantees and arrangements on both sides and at the same time. No party should be allowed to delay any of these measures, for example, the signing of the treaty banning weapons of mass destruction in this region. This way, peace and stability can be achieved for this region and its peoples. This will serve as an indispensable foundation for world peace and security.

Iranian Parliamentary Delegation Arrives

JN1703071595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohsen Yahyavi, member of the Iranian Majles and deputy chairman of the Iranian parliamentary branch, and his accompanying delegation arrived in Damascus this evening.

The delegation was received at Damascus International Airport by Ahmad al-Ahmad, member of the People's Assembly and secretary of the parliamentary executive committee, and the Iranian ambassador and embassy staff.

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Afghanistan

Unity Party's Khalili on Mezari Successor

LD1603145895 Tehran IRNA in English 1431 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 16, IRNA—The Islami Unity Party of Afghanistan [Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami] will maintain its role in the country despite its leader 'Abdol 'Ali Mezari's assassination, a member to the party's leadership council Karim Khalili told IRNA here Thursday [16 March].

Khalili said that his party's executive council would soon assign a successor for Mezari.

Mezari was killed by forces loyal to the Taleban group on Monday while being transferred to Ghazni from Chaharasiab.

Khalili said although the Unity Party had lost some of its positions in Kabul, it still enjoyed bases in Ghazni, Vardak, Oruzgan, Samangan, Balkh and Bamian provinces.

Ceremonies were held in various Afghan cities and Pakistani Sarhad Province over the past few days by Afghans on the occasion of Mezari's death.

Leadership Council To Continue Role

LD1603174595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Karim Khalili, a member of the leadership council of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], has confirmed that the party will continue its role in Afghan affairs. He announced: The executive council of the Hezb-e Wahdat will decide on Mr. Mazari's successor.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohaqeq, a representative of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami in Quetta, Pakistan, stressed today: Taleban's claim concerning the way 'Abdol-'Ali Mazari, one of the leaders of the Hezb-e Eslami, was martyred is not true. Taleban claimed that martyr Mazari was killed in a clash that occurred between his entourage and Taleban members while they were being transferred to Qandahar. Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohaqeq said: Mazari and nine of his companions had been invited to Chahar Asiab for talks with Taleban when they were apprehended and martyred.

India

Singh Presentation of 1995-96 Budget Viewed

Opposition, Business Leaders Comment

BK1503161295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Talking to the electronic media after the presentation of the budget, the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, said that the increase in the personal income tax limit from 35,000 to 40,000 [rupees per year] will give a relief to 80 lakh tax payers. Rebutting the charge that this budget is a populist one, Dr. Singh said the budget is in tune with the needs of the people. He said through this budget attempts have been made to directly attack poverty by higher allocation of rural development programs. In a reply to a question, he said the new measures in the budget will have a sobering effect on the inflation as the budget deficit has been limited to 5.5 percent of the income and money supply will be checked.

Giving his reaction, the prime minister said budget proposals are the continuation of the reform programs with more emphasis on antipoverty measures. Describing it as a budget of growth, Mr. Narasimha Rao said more concessions have been given to the poor. He said fiscal deficit is under control.

The left parties were of the view that import duty reduction will adversely affect the domestic industry to the advantage of multinationals. Mr. Somnath Chatterji of CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] said there are no proposals for sick industries. The CPI [Communist Party of India] leader, Mr. Inderjit Gupta, said it is a skillful budget with a lot of concessions for the middle class. He said this will also strengthen the rural infrastructure.

The leader of the opposition, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, describing the budget as clever, said the rising inflation and the reduced household savings have not been tackled. Another BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, observed that the budget does not have any measures to contain inflation and unemployment.

Indian industry has generally welcomed the union budget. The president of the Confederation of Indian Industries [CII], Mr. Rahul Bajaj, said the budget is pro-poor and pro-consumer. He said it is anti-inflationary. The former chairman of the Small-Scale Industries Committee of CII, Mr. S.S. Agarwal, described the budget as excellent for small units in present circumstances. He also welcomed the creation of a technology fund for the small-scale industry to improve the quality. The president of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, Mr. S.K. Bhajokia, described the budget as beneficial to all sections. He said it is anti-inflationary and antipoverty. The Eastern India Chapter of the Confederation of Indian Industries has hailed the proposal to set up a separate bank for industrial development in the northeastern region. Engineering Export Promotion Council has welcomed the union budget, saying that it will help the small and tiny sectors of industry. The president of the council, Mr. P.K. Shah, welcomed the continuance of certain incentives.

More Leaders React

BK1603050795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] More reactions to the budget have come in. The Congress-I has termed the budget as

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being growth-oriented and people-friendly. The party spokesman rejected the opposition charges that the budget was populist and described it as popular.

The Telugu Desam [Party] says that though many pro-poor programs have been announced, it will not have much impact because of meager allocation. The former finance minister, Mr. Madhu Dandavate, said the surplus has been reduced by substantial external borrowings. He said this will increase money supply and fuel double-digit inflation. The Janata Dal expressed dissatisfaction saying that there is not a word about tackling the rising prices. The Samata Party described the budget as routine and said it lacks the will to check poverty and unemployment.

The former chairman of the Finance Commission, Mr. K.C. Pant, said the budget seeks to maintain the broad thrust of economic reforms. He, however, said the fiscal deficit and inflation need to be kept under close scrutiny. The Haryana chief minister, Mr. Bhajan Lal, described the budget as rural development-oriented and pro-poor. The Kerala chief minister, Mr. K. Karunakaran, described the budget as the sum total of the economic progress achieved by the country in the last four years, while the caretaker chief minister of Bihar, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, labelled it as an election budget which could benefit the capitalists. The Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, described the budget as anti-poor and anti-farmer. The Assam chief minister, Mr. Hiteswar Saikia, hailed the budget proposals as positive with pro-poor features. In a statement, Mr. Saikia said that certain provisions like establishment of Northeast Development Bank would help in the industrial development of the region.

The West Bengal chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, said the budget had no specific proposal for reducing the rate of inflation. Describing the budget as growth-oriented, the Pondicherry chief minister, Mr. Vaithilingam, said that the central budget will benefit all sections of the society, particularly the poor and weaker sections. The president of the Indo-American Chammbers of Commerce, Mr. S.S. Kanwar, said the budget reflects the government's continuing resolve to make structural changes in its economy and thereby link it up with the global economy. The president of the PHD [Punjab-Haryana-Delhi] Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. R.K. Sabu, welcomed the introduction of a five-year tax holiday for investments made for the creation of infrastructure.

Commentary Welcomes Budget

BK1603061595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Commentary by A.N. Prabhu]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union budget for 1995-96 presented by the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, yesterday evening will go down in the economic history of the country as an experiment in innovation and breaking away from the past for more reasons than one. For the second year in succession, the union budget does not levy any taxes, but in fact leaves them alone. The five budgets the finance minister has obviously learned a lot and shared equally a lot as an academician. [sentence as heard]

The major thrust in the present budget, therefore, is to meet critics by their own game. He has often been accused of being oblivious to the plight of the poor in the context of the reforms program, of which he is the architect. The burden of the attack has been the benefits of reforms have not reached the poor, the needy and the deprived sections of the people, both in the cities and in the villages. The present budget obviously makes a valiant attempt at meeting the criticism squarely. It may look a please-all budget, but it goes far beyond it. The proposals are all-too-sweeping and wide, covering a large area. The objective is to make a dent into poverty. The involvement of panchayati raj [rural administration system] in implementing schemes should ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which they are allotted.

The proposal to extend insurance cover should be hailed as a bold step. So is the center's decision to join [as heard] the midday meal, now in operation in schools in some states. The cynics may say that the budget is populist in the sense that it is ai-med at winning over the voters in view of the severe drubbing the ruling party got at the recent assembly elections. But that is only one part of the story. The government has to show to the world that it meant to keep its word of continuing with reforms in letter and spirit. The budget, thus, reduces the peak rate of customs duty from 65 to 50 percent in continuation of the phased reduction over a period of time.

The widespread demand was to give economic reforms a human face. The budget does exactly that. It incorporates features missing out in the past to understand and appreciate the problems of the poorest of the poor, both in rural and urban areas. It is not as if the budget has solved all the problems facing the country—no single budget can. The objective should be: a budget should neatly dovetail into the next to achieve a long-term objective. Dr. Manmohan Singh has sought to achieve that and hopefully with some measure of success.

No 'Clear' Inflation Strategy Noted

BK1703020795 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 16 Mar 95 p 10

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a world in which perception is regarded as more important than substance, the Union finance minister, Mr Manmohan Singh, has understandably chosen to emphatically project the view that his budgetary strategy for 1995-96 is focused on fighting inflation. Inflation is, without doubt, the most important problem facing the citizen. Unfortunately, however, the budget does not reveal any clear strategy to fight it. In his anxiety to pursue a variety of goals ranging from trade policy liberalisation to poverty alleviation, industrial revival, export promotion and deficit reduction, Mr

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Singh seems to have lost sight of the central objective. Apart from reposing faith in competitive market forces and expressing the hope that a reduction in customs and excise duties will be reflected in reduced prices, Mr Singh has done very little to decisively rein in inflationary pressures. Past experience does not encourage hope about the willingness of business and commerce to pass on the benefit of reduced duties to consumers.

Caught in the trade-off between controlling inflation and facilitating growth, Mr Singh appears to have opted for a growth- promoting strategy, trusting that expanded output will cap inflation. Even this growth is predicated upon private-sector initiative rather than any stimulus from public investment. Evidently, Mr Singh hopes that private investment will take over from where he has left off and provide the stimulus for growth. In his anxiety to keep the fiscal, budget and revenue deficits under check, Mr Singh has continued with his policy of the last few years of sacrificing capital expenditure. Total capital expenditure has declined from Rs 39,370 crore in 1994-95 to Rs 35,820 crore in 1995-96.

Admittedly, Mr Singh has provided some incentives for private-sector investment, especially in the infrastructure sector. The tax holiday for private investment in infrastructure, particularly roads and air and sea ports, should help revive investment activity in an area completely neglected by the government for quite some time now. Interestingly, financial institutions, including insurance companies, which extend debt to such investment activity will qualify for a 40 percent tax exemption on interest incomes. This is part of the package to re-direct domestic and overseas savings through a reformed capital market, with Indian and overseas intermediaries taking up the space which the government is no longer in a position to finance.

While liberalisation and excise duty cuts are aimed at stimulating the corporate sector, financial incentives have been given to promote the small-scale sector. A significant aspect of the budget is the incentives given for investment in the rural economy, both in farm and non-farm activity. In order to promote employment, the finance minister has also given several incentives to the small-scale and village industries sectors.

Undoubtedly, there are many things that are good in the budget. The increase in the ratio of direct taxes to national income is a welcome and historic development in the best traditions of sound public finance. While taxpayers will welcome the raising of the exemption limit, they will understandably be disappointed that no further concessions have been made. However, Mr Singh was right to state that 'direct taxation is the most equitable form of raising revenues'. Not only has he shifted the emphasis from indirect to direct taxes, he has also offered incentives to promote household savings. However, this welcome change in the philosophy of public finance has not been matched by an equal realisation of the value of reducing dependence on debt-financed public expenditure. A disturbing consequence of this strategy is the growing burden of interest payments. Total capital expenditure is a mere two-thirds of interest payments. Such a low level of public investment, combined with growing interest burden and persisting inflationary pressures, is not conducive for sustainable long-term growth.

A second positive ?aspect of Mr Singh's presentation was his concern for the financial health of state governments. His decision to accept in full the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission is a significant gesture to state governments despite this implying that non-plan grants to states and Union Territories have increased almost three-fold compared to last year. Hopefully he will also consider sympathetically the suggestion for pooling all major taxes of the central government and devolving the recommended 29 percent to the states.

An important propaganda plank of the finance minister has been that he has stepped up expenditure on rural development out by facts. There,is if anything, a decline in their share of central plan outlay and central government expenditure in 1995-96, compared to 1994-95. The increase in central plan outlay is largely in the energy, industry and minerals and transport sector. In fact, many of the pro-poor schemes have been carved out of the banking and financial sectors without too much burden being placed on the budget this year. The impact of the new initiatives for the poor will, clearly, depend on the implementation of the various schemes proposed. Both the National Industries Development Board of India have been charged with the responsibility of improving the government's image among the depressed sections.

Another welcome feature of the budget, especially in this context, is the focus on financial sector reforms. In particular, the decision to constitute an independent regulatory authority for the insurance sector is a belated first step in the direction of a reform of the insurance industry.

Mr Singh has also shown his commitment to trade liberalisation by persisting with the reduction in peak tariff and in duties on capital goods and intermediates. However, the distortion introduced by low tariffs in these sectors with a ban on consumer goods imports remains. The focus of trade policy must shift to consumer goods before any further action is contemplated in the capital goods sector. Trade liberalisation is expected to ease supply side bottlenecks, even if there is some adverse impact on domestic industry. To some extent Mr Singh has sought to balance the impact of reduced tariffs with a reduction in excise duties. However, if for this reason industry absorbs the impact of tariff reduction by not passing on the benefit of reduced excise duties to the consumer, the intended anti-inflationary impact may be muted. The objective, of course, is to boost the profitability of investment and, thereby, generate a higher level of industrial production.

However, at the end of the day, the concern remains with fiscal stabilisation. In 1993-94 the actual fiscal deficit to

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national income ratio has turned out to be 7.3 percent against a budgeted ratio of 4.5 percent. In 1994-95 the gap between the budgeted and revised estimates is 0.7 percent of GDP. Given this track record, and the heroism of the assumption regarding direct tax collections, it is difficult to imagine that in 1995-96 the ratio will remain at 5.5 percent of GDP unless valiant efforts are made in disciplining the government. To expect this in an election year is foolhardy. Where does that leave us? Clearly, Mr Singh has been able to signal his commitment to industrial, tax and trade policy reform through the current budget. Structural adjustment is , therefore, largely on course. However, fiscal stabilisation, the other side of the Narasimha Rao government's new economic policy, remains under a cloud. The growing pressure of debt-financed government expenditure remains the single important challenge to future finance ministers. India has paid a heavy price for the fiscal profligacy of the 1980s when high growth was bought at the expense of future tax-paying generations. That strategy of depending on postponing the day of fiscal reckoning has not been completely abandoned.

The battle against inflation must be fully joined not merely because that is politically popular but also because the stability of the Indian economy depends on it. In a globalised economy, inflation is no longer a domestic political issue. With substantial cross border flows, overseas investors stand to take huge capital losses on account of devaluation. The crisis in Mexico is perhaps a forerunner of the international consequences of inflation driven by imprudent financial management. Surely, Mr Singh is aware of all these dangers, which is why he emphasised the importance of fiscal prudence. However, it is necessary to demonstrate in practice a commitment to such prudence.

2nd Phase of Bihar Voting 'Generally Peaceful'

BK1603140995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bihar, 55-60 percent votes were polled in the second phase of assembly elections in 52 constituencies today. Voting was generally peaceful. Our Patna correspondent reports that nine cases of booth capturing have been reported and 160 people including two Janata Dal legislators have been taken into custody while moving with firearms during polling.

The Election Commission has asked for the immediate suspension of the district magistrate and superintendent of police of Aurangabad District for alleged electoral malpractices. It may be recalled that the commission had earlier recommended suspension of the district magistrate and the superintendent of police of Gaya District.

Commentary Views 'Major Setback' for Congress

BK1703023995 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 10 Mar 95 p 10

["Political Commentary" by Inder Malhotra: "A big blow to the congress"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] By now two seemingly contradictory but actually complementary implications of the election results in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa are clear. First, that while the Congress party has suffered a major setback, it has averted a total disaster, and secondly, the blows that the electorate has delivered to it are far heavier than the Congress is prepared to concede, for the present at any rate.

Of course, the loss to the Congress of the two western states, politically more shattering in Gujarat and psychologically more damaging in Maharashtra, has to be balanced against its impressive, if unexpected, victory in Orissa, but then all this has to be viewed in the conctext of the earlier Congress rout in Karnataka and Andhra.

The states where the Congress has bitten the dust since the last round of elections are large, populous politically important and economically crucial. It is hard to overstate Maharashtra's commercial and financial significance to the country. Gujarat looks like catching up with Maharashtra in industrialisation and exceeding it in fresh investment. Under these circumstances it is futile for congress spokesmen to crow—as the minister of state in the PMO [Prime Minister's Office], Mr Bhuvanesh Chaturvedi did in a recent interview—that apart from wresting Orissa from the Janata Dal, his party has won also in Manipur, Mizoram and some other ministates in the north-east.

Sullied Image

Not to put too fine a point on it, 660 million Indians, out of a total of 900 million, now live in states outside the Congress party's control. To this figure another 20 million may have to be added fairly soon. For, in Kerala, Mr K. Karunakaran, arguably the chief minister with the most sullied image, has contributed considerably to damage the prospects of the Congress in the state. Many Congress leaders feel that the present electoral verdicts are not an unmitigated disaster as by the time the Lok Sabha elections come around, today's victors have been in office long enough to become unpopular.

There is some point in this but it should not be exaggerated. The anti-incumbency feeling is real but it is only a part of the reality. During the election campaigns in the two southern and two western states, for instance, it was quite clear to any interested observer that the anti Congress sentiment went far beyond mere dislike or the incumbent. The situation in other parts of the country is unlikely to be different, and the reasons for this are not far to seek.

In India today no species is so despised, indeed so hated, as politicians. All political parties and almost all politicians are deemed corrupt, fraudulent and parasitic. It is the Congress, however, which, presumably because of its excessively long innings in power, is perceived to be the epitome of rampant corruption, murky manipulation, systematic subversion of democratic norms and the consequent degeneration of the country's public life.

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By some of its actions even after the announcement of the results in the latest round of state assembly elections, the Congress leadership may well have strengthened the public's view of it. For, the party's first reflex was almost Pavlovian. It had been rejected by the Maharashtra voters even if the Shiv Sena-BJP combination had not secured a clear majority. And yet the decision taken in Delhi on Sunday night was that the Congress must form a government in Maharashtra by hook or by crook. For this dubious task Mr Sharad Pawar, with his legandary manipulative skills, was ideally suited.

Empty Boast

In his interview to the BBC, broadcast in the Hindi service on the morning of Monday, March 13 Mr Chaturvedi declared confidently: "By this evening we will also form the government in Maharashtra". By the time the deadline expired the bland forecast had turned into an empty boast. But this was not for want of trying.

In the first place, there was no way Mr Pawan could muster even a water-thin majority. To overcome the 139 seats won by the SS-BJP [Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party] Alliance, he needed to rope in practically all other newly-elected MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly]. This was patently impossible. Secondly, dissidents within the Maharashtra Congress (defeat is no unifier where the Congress is concerned) made no bones about their demand that Mr Pawar should not be the leader of a Congress-led ministry. Their hands were strengthened when the 11-member Janata Dal made it clear that it would prop a Congress ministry only on condition that Mr Pawar was not made chief minister. The game was thus up, and Mr Pawar made a virtue of necessity as best he could.

About the most disgraceful part of the story there is not even a whisper of protest in the Congress circles. In its bid to form a ministry in Maharashtra the so-call Congress high command was prepared to welcome back into the fold every single Congress "rebel" who had won the election and to reward quite a few of them with ministerial office. Only a month earlier Mr Narasimha Rao had denounced these men and women in no uncertain terms. He had called them "betrayers of the party" who would readily "betray also their mothers".

In a milieu like this is it any surprise that no one is a respector of anything or anybody? The ugly incidents at the residence of the Congress M.P., Mr Aslam Sher Khan, where his colleagues had assembled to discuss the party's electoral reverses and the "crisis" created by the expulsion of Mr Arjun Singh speak for themselves. Ironically, one of the Congress M.P.s injured in the melee, Captain Ayub, is a hero of the 1965 war and decorated with a Vir Chakra.

Striking Feature

The most striking feature of the current Congress scene is that all discussion focused almost exclusively on proving that the election results in Maharashtra and Gujarat have had no damaging effect on Mr Narasimha Rao's position as Prime Minister and Congress president. No one is even thinking of the paramount need of the hour, a vigorous attempt at a Congress revival between now and the next parliamentary elections which have to be held at the latest around this time next year. Technically, these can be delayed until June 1996. But that would be, almost literally, midsummer madness. In 1991, elections in the hottest month of the year were necessitated by extraordinary circumstances.

It is, of course, true that there is no immediate or foreseeable danger to Mr Narasimha Rao's occupancy of 2 Race Course Road. Apart from everything else there is no credible challenger around in the Congress party, Mr Arjun Singh has already been excommunicated. Mr Pawar without power in his home state is like Samson after his famous haircut. The outcry by the BJP and the Janata Dal for immediate parliamentary polls is only for the record. But here is the other side of the coin.

Former minister of state, Mr P.R. Kumaramangalam, is of the opinion that the Congress is nobody's zamindari. Mr Sher Khan's house is not the only place where the Congress culture is on display. No Congress formation, except for the Disciplinary Action Committee, functions. The Parliamentary Board does not even exist; Congress M.P.s are demanding the right to be heard at meetings of the Congress parliamentary party where traditionally only "the leader" speaks. And, above all, the Union government, dysfunctional in recent weeks, is in grave danger or being paralysed. None of this is conducive to enhancing the Prime Minister's prestige—at home or abroad.

U.S. Offer To Mediate on Kashmir 'Naive'

BK1703093995 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 10 Mar 95 p 6

[Article by K. Subrahmanyam under the rubric 'Global Watch': "US mediation for Kashmir"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE IRREPRESSIBLE US assistant secretary of state, Ms Robin Raphel, is again in the Indian newspaper headlines, this time offering a more explicit US role in solving the Kashmir dispute if both India and Pakistan wished for that. She acknowledges that India's opposition to any third party in Kashmir has meant the US has not been able to play that role. She alluded to the US defence secretary, Mr William Perry's offer during his recent visit to play such a role if both countries desired it. She also referred to Pakistan's request to US to be a mediator and the US reply that it is not in a position to be a mediator in the absence of acceptance by both sides (in this case by India).

What she did not refer to was that Mr Perry was clearly told in the presence of Ms Raphel in a non-official dialogue that US cannot have such a mediatory role in view of the history of last four decades of tilt towards

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Pakistan. It is probable Mr Perry would have been told the same thing in official discussions too.

Our home minister, Mr S B Chavan's recent statement about the 'third hand' in Kashmir tends to reflect the government view that US is not considered as a nonpartisan facilitator in any Indo-Pakistan dispute. Would US accept Indian good offices in regard to its disputes with Cuba, Libya and Iran? One wonders about the astuteness of the judgement of the Americans who, after reading the Indian Press and inter-acting with the political parties and leaders of this country still think it appropriate to make such naive offers.

There is no comparison between Indo-Pakistan problem and the Middle East issue. There, the two sides were not in communication with each other. Whereas, here India and Pakistan have been in touch with each other for the last 47 years in spite of all fluctuations in ties and two brief conflicts.

In the Middle East, the core of the problem is about Israel vacating the land and population it had subjected to occupation in the war of 1967. In the Indo-Pakistan case, Kashmir is not the core dispute as Pakistan claims and the US appears to agree. The Kashmir dispute is a symptom of a deeper conflict about what was the partition about. India maintains and the Indian Independence Act 1947 makes it clear that partition was about certain provinces seceding from India. Pakistan asserts it is a division of the country on the basis of two nation theory. It's claim to Kashmir is based on the two nation theory and not on the Indian Independence Act which vested the power to accede solely in the princely ruler—a provision actively campaigned for and endorsed by Jinnah the founder of Pakistan and the Muslim League.

The developments of last four decades prove the Pakistani contention on partition is totally untenable. Bangladeshi muslims have seceded from Pakistan. Muslims of Indian origin who migrated to Pakistan have been discriminated against. There are tensions between Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Pakistan government. There are more muslims in India than in Pakistan. Therefore, the Indo- Pakistan problem is not in the same category of the Middle East peace process. If this basic issue is not understood and the US administration starts looking at Kashmir as the core dispute then that will highlight the US tilt towards Pakistan and disqualify it from playing any mediatory role. That is the position today.

Any involvement of US in this complicated issue will only strain Indo-US relations and vitiate the atmosphere that is necessary to promote commercial interactions.

Pakistan's overemphasis on religion as the sole basis for national identity has led to virulent sectarianism and alienation of millions of muslims of Indian origin there.

Pakistan has to take corrective measures to redress this imbalance and concentrate on nation building. Only then they will be able to take a realistic view of the Kashmir problem. Till then India will have to learn to live with the problem and so should US.

Iran

Ahmad Khomeyni Declared Dead Following Stroke

LD1703130295 Tehran IRNA in English 1254 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, the only surviving son of the founder of the Islamic Republic, the late imam Khomeyni, left for heavenly abode today plunging the nation in gloom.

Hoj. Khomeyni, 50, was undergoing treatment at the Baqiatollah Hospital in Tehran following a severe stroke on his heart and the nervous system on Sunday March 12.

Despite the untiring efforts of the medical team, led by Dr. Hassan 'Arefi, and comprising Health Minister Dr. 'Ali Reza Marandi, and Dr. Iraj Fazel, and Dr. Malekzadeh, as well as a British specialist who was flown to tehran, Hoj. Khomeyni's conditions showed no signs of recovery and worsened by the day.

There were prayers and supplications to the Almighty throughout the last few days by the faithful for the recovery of the son of their beloved leader.

He was a prominent face in the struggle against the oppressors, and spared no efforts to safeguard the legacy of his immortal father.

In the years before the Islamic revolution, he suffered exile and hardship along with his father, and after the triumph of the movement and the founding of the Islamic Republic in Iran, it was a familiar sight to see Seyyed Ahmad accompanying Imam Khomeyni.

The imam's elder son, Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Mustafa Khomeyni, was martyred in mysterious circumstances in 1977 during exile in holy Najaf, Iraq.

Seyyed Ahmad was born in the holy city of Qom in 1324 (1945), and having finished high school, he studied theological courses upon the recommendations of his father.

For a period of five years, he attended courses in theology being instructed by prominent scholars including the late imam Khomeyni.

He leaves behind three sons, Hassan, Yasir and 'Ali.

His elder son, Hassan, 23, is a student at the Qom School of Theology.

Hospital Details Time of Death

LD1703134795 Tehran IRNA in English 1333 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNa—Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni departed

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from the mortal world at 15:00 hours local time (11:30 GMT) on Friday [17 March], the hospital staff told IRNA here today.

The son of the late imam Khomeyni was hospitalized at Baqiatollah Hospital on March 12 following a severe stroke on his heart, and despite the intensive efforts of a special medical team, failed to respond to the treatment.

He was 50 years, and leaves behind three sons, the eldest of Seyyed Hassan Khomeyni, 23, is studying at the Qom Theological School.

Al-Qadhdhafi Sends Sympathy Cable

LD1603213495 Tehran IRNA in English 2002 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi sent a cable [of] sympathy to the leader of the Islamic revolution Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i for the condition of Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni who is now in a state of coma in the wake of cardiac deficiency earlier this week.

Al-Qadhdhafi has also requested that he be kept informed of the status of the son of the late Imam Khomeyni, and of his improvement.

Israeli 'Spy' Reportedly Arrested in Karaj

NC1703075295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's edition of the Tehran paper ETTELA'AT reported that an Israeli spy and several others were arrested in Karaj. The newspaper gave no further details.

Clinton Backs Away From Banning Conoco Oil Deal

LD1703132395 Tehran IRNA in English 1312 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, March 17, IRNA—U.S. President Bill Clinton has backed away from directly banning a deal to develop two Iranian offshore oil fields signed by a Dutch subsidary of Conoco two weeks ago.

According to a copy of his executive order obtained by IRNA, his new emergency prohibition also makes no mention of restricting U.S. companies from buying Iranian oil for sale to third countries or trying to bar joint projects involving Iran elsewhere.

The extraordinary vindictive line taken by Clinton was said to be aimed to block the Conoco deal but left a loophole in banning American involvement in oil projects by excluding contracts and permits "granted prior to the effective date" of March 16.

The dilemma faced by the Clinton administration was underlined by Conoco Vice President Michael Stinson, who was quoted warning the Senate Banking Committee Thursday that other countries would be happy to develop the Iranian offshore fields.

Also giving evidence, Under-Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff, was said to have cautioned against unilateral sanctions, which would hurt the U.S. more than Tehran.

One of the problems he identified was that the U.S. "would not be able to convince" other major trading partners of Iran to adopt prohibitions on trade in non-sensitive goods.

Underlining Washington's predicament, Iran's Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh announced the same day that Iran had signed contracts with European companies to develop the country's biggest gas field, South Pars, and to repair Abuzar oil facilities.

In relation to Senate proposals for a total ban on lifting Iranian oil, Tarnoff was said to have warned against the move against foreign subsidaries of U.S. companies because it could also provoke complex international litigation.

Radio on U.S.-Backed 'Conspiracy' Against Shiites

NC1603194995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[Station commentary: "Terrorism in Regional States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What is happening in neighboring states calls for meditation. The genocide being committed against the sons of the Shiite sect in mosques and other places in Pakistan, particularly Karachi, the oppression and persecution of Shiites in Bahrain, the general campaign to crush Shiites in Afghanistan, and, finally, the massacres against 'Alawites in Istanbul all indicate that there is a conspiracy behind the scenes to annihilate the sons of this sect, break their strength, or corner them.

By sowing the seeds of sedition and discord between the Sunni and Shiites through the Wahabi movement, the spearhead in the American campaign to divide the Islamic Nation, the United States wants to prove to the Islamic world that Shiites cannot coexist with their brother Sunnis. This is on the one hand.

On the other, the United States wants to surround the Islamic Republic of Iran to force it to cut its support to Muslim revolutionaries to spare them the risk of being massacred or murdered. The United States and the Wahabis can then mount their campaign against Muslims in a more barbaric way, driving a wedge between them and Islamic Iran, their first protector. To do that, America claims that Iran, prompted by its political interests, abandoned its leading role with these revolutionaries.

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To say the truth, the conspiracy to annihilate Shiites in neighboring states is not targeted against the Islamic Republic alone; it targets the entire Pakistani and Turkish people. In Pakistan, America obviously seeks to weaken government control on the country. It only wants to cause problem for that government because peace and stability in Islamabad will strengthen Islam in the region and the world.

The Pakistani Air Force is therefore facing several problems because of Washington's deception and its delay in shipping spare parts that were ordered and paid for. Moreover, Washington is trying to find ways to raise the issue of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, mainly because of Pakistan's position on the Islamic revival.

As far as Turkey is concerned, America and Europe are monitoring developments in an irritating manner. After all, Turkey is a member of NATO, which developed a new strategy to eliminate Islamic movements. According to NATO secretary general, these movements are more dangerous than Communism and cold war. NATO held a meeting some time ago with other non-NATO members—Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, and the Israeli being—to discuss ways to confront what they termed as Islamic fundamentalism and benefit from these states' experiences in crushing the growing Islamic activity.

Therefore, Turkey has to mount the tide of terrorism for fear of the coming alternative, represented in the al-Rafah party, or else it will not be accepted in the European Union.

Hence, what the Americans and the West want from Turkey is the political destabilization that serves their interest, no matter how long the Turkish people are tortured or oppressed. They believe that the democracy America and the West claim to exercise does not work with the Islamic people. Will the Muslim people wake up and see this major conspiracy, whose smoke is spreading to all parts of the Islamic world?

Ban of Satellite Dishes Effective in Apr

LD1403172295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The law banning the use of satellite dishes, passed recently by the Majles, is to be implemented from the middle of Favardin [first week of April].

Minister of Interior 'Ali Mohammad Besharati told reporters today that the people of our country have great respect for the law and it is envisioned that the satellite owners will bring down their own dishes before the law is implemented. [passage omitted]

Rafsanjani Inaugurates Bafq-Bandar Abbas Railway

Afghan, Kyrgyz Presidents Arrive

LD1603193395 Tehran IRNA in English 1627 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kish, Hormozgan Prov., March 16, IRNA—President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev and President Borhanoddin Rabbani of Afghanistan arrived here on Thursday [16 March] to attend the inauguration ceremony of Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway and were welcomed by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Akayev said upon his arrival at the airport that Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway would serve to further expand relations between Iran and Kyrgyzstan.

Afghan president said on his part that the Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway was an important project.

The 700 kms Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway joining Europe, the Central Asia and Caucasus to the Persian Gulf is due to be opened on Friday in a special ceremony.

Meanwhile, the first deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan arrived in Kish today and was welcomed by Iranian Foreign Minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Georgian Prime Minister Comments

LD1603151895 Tehran IRNA in English 1306 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—The Georgian Prime Minister Otar Patsatsia arrived here Thursday [16 March] to attend the inaugural ceremony of Bandar Abbas-Bafq railway. He was welcomed by Iran's first vice-president, Hassan Habibi.

Talking to reporters at Mehrabad Airport, he commented that building of Bandar-abbas railway was a major project which could have positive effects on development of ties among regional countries.

He said that he would discuss expansion of economic, trade and political ties with Iran with Iranian officials.

He referred to energy and tourism as other topics he would review during his visit.

Patsatsia is accompanied by Georgian deputy premier and a number of deputies of different ministries in his two-day visit.

Habibi told reporters that Iran-Georgia ties were historical, adding that in the short period after the country's independence the mutual ties have been consolidated.

He believed that presence of ranking officials from regional countries indicated the importance of the Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway project.

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The Bafq-Bandar Abbas railway will officially open Friday by the Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-rafsanajni. A number of presidents and prime ministers of Central Asian states will participate in the ceremony.

The vice-presdent expressed hope that the opening of the railway would develope connections between Central Asia and Caucasia with Far East and Europe.

After arrival the Georgian prime minister started his first round of talks with Habibi. .

Security Agreement Signed With Greece

LD1603185795 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran and Greece signed an agreement in Tehran today under which the two countries will increase their cooperation in issues related to security, law and order, and the fight against drugs.

The agreement, signed by the Iranian interior minister ['Ali Mohammad Besharati] and the Greek public order minister [Stilianos Papathemelis], demands that the two countries cooperate in the extradition of criminals who are being sought and against international terrorism.

The two countries have also agreed, among other things, to cooperate in the ongoing fight against the merchants of death and in confronting actions disturbing public order.

Following the signing of the agreement, the Greek public order minister said that his country could be a bridge for better relations between Iran and Europe, specially the European Community.

In turn, Mr. Besharati expressed satisfaction with the agreement and said that the two countries have many common elements which will contribute to a better future between them.

Mexican Envoy on Trade Cooperation Plans

LD1603114595 Tehran IRNA in English 1046 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—The Mexican ambassador to Iran, Antonio Duenas, expressed opitimistic views about closer industrial and commercial cooperation between his country and Iran.

Talking exculsively to IRAN NEWS, printed Thursday [16 March], he said that "both sides have to do a lot of homework before joining hands in working or an expansion of trade or setting up joint ventures in steel or other industrries."

Pointing to his country's extensive cooperation with Iran in supplying pipelines for oil and natural gas in pre-revolution years when Iran was establishing the iron-sponge material section of the Mubarake steel mill, he said that Mexico had also cooperated with Ahvaz steel mill. "However," he stated, "we had a 13-year break in our relations as in the 1980s Mexico closed its embassy and our relations remained at a very low level."

The ambassador added that Iran and Mexico have plans to expand their petrochemical industries and for this purpose both sides should adopt specific measures.

He further noted that his country as a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and Iran as a member of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) could contribute to collaboration between the two major regional organizations.

NAFTA covers a 360-million population while ECO has over 300 million people with enormous economic potential, but "before we talk about cooperation between NAFTA and ECO, certain major hurdles should be removed," he remarked.

He went on to say that "in Iran, we are still waiting for a specific policy concerning foreign investment. We are following Iran's market economy policy very closely."

He also referred to Iran's solo trade fair in Mexico City last year and said that it had attracted huge crowds.

ABRAR on Russian Round Table

NC1703111695 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 7 Mar 95 p 2

[Report from the Foreign News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] A high-level official from the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that one of the reasons for the cancellation of U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to Moscow was differences between the two countries on Russia's peaceful nuclear cooperation with Iran.

It had been decided that Clinton would visit Moscow to attend the ceremonies to observe the 50th anniversary of the second World War, but the visit was canceled. The U.S. President has stated that he will visit Moscow in the first half of the current year.

Speaking to the ABRAR correspondent, Konstantin Shuvalyov, the head of the Iran desk at the Russian Foreign Ministry, stressed the continued cooperation between Moscow and Tehran. He added: Russia is an independent country and freely decides its own policy. Commenting on the need for broadening cooperation between the two countries, he said: Russia and Iran should both display their goodwill for the future of bilateral relations so that the prospects for these relations will be quite bright.

Regarding the mode of ensuring security and stability in the Persian Gulf, the Russian Foreign Ministry official said: In recent years, a system of security has been instituted in the region by the littoral states of the Persian Gulf under which U.S. assistance was elicited.

Shuvalyov added: The officials of those countries expressed their dissatisfaction at the inefficiency of this security system in their talks with Russian delegations.

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In his opinion, it is possible that the stability and security of the Persian Gulf can be ensured in three stages: First, the regional countries should cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally with one another and evolve a sort of security system.

In the next stage, countries such as Pakistan, India, Syria, and Egypt can be inducted into the system, and in the final stage, security and stability in the Persian Gulf can be attained by enlisting the cooperation of the United Nations.

In answer to the question on whether the United States considers Russia its rival in the Persian Gulf, Shuvalyov, who had come to Tehran to participate in the Iran-Russia round table, said: We do not consider ourselves rivals of the United States. However, every country has the right to expand relations with this region. If this is the perception that the United States has of Russia, so be it.

In any case, according to the Public Relations Department of the Office of International and Political Studies of the Foreign Ministry, the concluding session of the Russia-Iran round table was convened this afternoon at the office premises presided over by Engineer 'Abbas Maleki, the deputy foreign minister for Education and Research Affairs at the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry.

The speakers at this session included Mehdi Safari, the Islamic Republic of Iran ambassador in Moscow, and Andranik Migranyan, a member of the Russian advisory council. The speakers elaborated on the bases and principles of the relations between the two countries. Safeguarding of the borders, the Caspian Sea issue, the Central Asian countries, and the Caucasus were also discussed.

The practical recommendations for broadening relations between the two countries by creating a consultative mechanism [preceding word in English] in the political as well as the economic sphere were also mentioned and the geographical location as well as the political will of the two countries was emphasized. Other speakers commented on the difficulties faced by traders such as banking, language differences, high interest rates, the activation of the Chambers of Commerce in the two countries, the establishment of information centers, and the stipulation of foreign investment regulations. A report on the activities regarding cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia was also presented.

The speakers alluded to the quest by Iran and Russia for an identity and to Russia's political determination to prevent any country from dominating the region. It was stressed that Iran and Russia are natural allies with distinctive natural resources and the predominance of any third power should be prevented. This is related to the manner in which the two sides define their strategic objectives. It was also stated that Russia's influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus should be treated with respect and if domination is not the objective, cooperation is possible.

The report states: The fourth working session of the Russia-Iran round table was held yesterday morning. The topic of this session was "Iran and Russia—Bilateral Economic Relations." The speakers at this session were Mohammad Nahavandian, deputy commerce minister and head of the Institute of Commercial Studies and Research; Vladimir Yurtayev, the director of the Russian foreign trade council; and Bizhan Bonakdar, head of the office of Strategic Studies at the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry.

At this session the speakers detailed the economic situation in Russia with regard to privatization and free trade. The issue of relative facilities in relations between the two countries, which can be a natural complement to one another, was discussed in another part of the session. The Iranian speakers stated that in most of the development projects the technology of transit [preceding word in English] as propounded by Iran for Russia to gain access to the Persian Gulf merits attention. The subjects of the Caspian Sea; the activation of its economic committee; the establishment of permanent exhibition venues in both countries; and collaboration in joint projects for production, export, and dissemination of information were the other issues discussed at this session. Similarly, the need for a durable and logical relationship despite U.S. pressure was stressed by the speakers.

The report states that the third working session of the Iran-Russia round table began yesterday morning. The topic for this session was: "Russia and Iran—Bilateral Political Relations in the Present and Future." The speakers at this session were Hoseyn Naraqian, head of the CIS desk at the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry; Konstantin Shuvalyov, deputy minister for the Third Asian Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry [title as published]; and Firuz Dowlatabadi, adviser to the foreign minister and head of the Strategic Studies Group in the Directorate of International and Political Affairs.

At this session, the participants spoke of the reciprocal importance of the two countries, their common objectives and interests, and Iran's geopolitical situation in the region and its economic market, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran's influence in the region and the Islamic world. Political, economic, and cultural considerations in the relations between the two countries, an appraisal of existing obstacles, the fast-paced events unfolding in Russia, the need to infuse a dynamism in the various dimensions of mutual relations, consistent follow-up for the purpose of implementing the agreements reached to combat the atmosphere whipped up by the West, and efforts with regard to the Caspian Sea were among the topics of the speeches at this session.

The Iran-Russia round table was convened with the joint cooperation of the Russian Strategic Research and Studies Center and the Office of International and Political Studies of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry on 5 and 6 March.

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Debt Rescheduling Accord Signed With Austria

LD1703100695 Tehran IRNA in English 0925 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vienna, March 17, IRNA—Iran and Austria have signed a debts rescheduling agreement, according to an announcement here Thursday [16 March].

The agreement was signed by the Iranian Central Bank and four major Austrian banks—Bank Austria, Bawag, Creditanstalt (CA) and Raiffeisen.

It includes Austrian commercial bank and exporters subsidies totalling dlrs 120 million.

The agreement, valid from April 1, is for three years with a five percent down payment and quarter-yearly repayments, the Raiffeisen Bank said.

700 Billion Rials Slated for Reconstruction

LD1403215895 Tehran IRNA in English 2032 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 14., IRNA—For the upcoming calendar year 1374 (to start March 21) about rls 700 billion in credit facilities has been earmarked for rehabilitating towns and cities damaged during the nearly eight years of the Iraqi aggression.

A Majlis act provides that rehabilitation of those areas should be complete by the end of the third year of the second national development plan (to start this year), for which rls 2,2100 billion has been allocated.

The rehabilitation credit for the year 1374 is in two parts. The first part is rls 340 billion to be paid out as compensation for damages incurred by housing quarters, business buildings, animal husbandry, agriculture facilities, and expenses for offering lodging facilities to dislodged people, and the second part is rls 360 billion for provincial development projects.

In provincial credits, Khuzestan receives rls 137.5 billion, Kermanshah rls 51.5 billion, and Kordestan rls 27 billion, and West Azarbaijan rls seven billion. Already upwards of rls 2,459 billion has been allocated by the government for reconstructing war-damaged areas which has been in addition to credits for rehabilitating major industries such as steel industries, power plants, plants and factories such as HEPCO and oil and petrochemical industries which have had their own credits for rehabilitation. Certain plants and factories, too, have borne their own reconstruction expenses without benefiting from any government allowances.

The owner of each dwelling unit damaged during the war years will receive at most rls 8,500,000 indemnity in gratis plus a low- interest loan of rls six million.

The administration has decided to rehabilitate war-torn towns and cities in exactly as they were before the war and without relocating any part of the damaged towns and cities to another part of the towns which commitment explains the high cost of rehabilitation projects.

During the next three years, the headquarters for rehabilitating war-torn areas of the country is to build or rebuild 2,260 classrooms, as well as implement 93 health and medicare services, irrigation and water supply projects for 85 villages, rebuilding the embankments along nine kilometers of coastline, and re-asphalting 652 kilometers of streets and their concrete curbsides with a minimum width of 10 meters.

Out [as received] rls 90 billion is needed for rebuilding city streets in the once thriving port cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr. Since March 21, 1994 almost rls 60 billion was expended for rehabilitating water and sewage systems in the city of Abadan, and in the entirety of Khuzestan Province. Thus far almost rials 36 billion has been allocated for rebuilding the drainage curbs of city streets, open drains of streets and pedestrian bridges in Khuzestan Province.

Since the ceasefire stopped the Iraqi war in August 1988 as many as 33 large and small power stations that had been devastated have been rebuilt and 419 kilometers of medium-voltage as well as low- voltage powerlines have been re-installed or repaired.

In addition to levelling farmlands and paying indemnifying famers and cattle-breeders in war-damaged areas as much as 17.6 cubic meters of water per second has been supplied to 18,360 hectares of farmlands.

Much of the lands previously devoted to dry farming are now used as farms with irrigation water, and it is expected as by March 1996 an additional water supply at 13.5 cubic meters per second another 14,300 hectares of lands now on dry farming will be supplied with water. The public relations office of the presidential institution says since march 1990 as many as 871 rehabilitation projects have been succesfully undertaken, 631 of them already complete and another 340 still in progress.

In Kermanshah Province in western Iran, of the total 597 reconstruction projects already 477 are complete, and in Ilam Province to its south, of the total 413 such projects 314. Elsewhere in Kordestan Province, as many as 10,080 reconstruction projects have been undertaken since march 1987, 989 of them already complete.

Emami-Kashani Condemns Mazari Assassination

LD1703115495 Tehran IRNA in English 1106 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—A senior cleric here Friday condemned the assassination of Wahdat-e Eslami (Islamic Unity) Party leader Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdol-'Ali Mazari on Monday [13 March] by the Taleban Group and said his assassins were agents of "global arrogance."

The substitute Friday prayers leader of Tehran Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani referred to the "tyrannical

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and dastardly" act of "the global arrogance and the U.S.," through a "corrupt and mischievous" group, as a plot hatched against the Muslim world, especially against Afghan Muslims.

Mazari along with several Wahdat-e Eslami party members were martyred on Monday after being taken captive by the Taleban Group.

Emami-Kashani said the Muslim people of Afghanistan should know that the global arrogance's main objective behind such acts was to sow discord among Shiites and Sunnis for its own interests. The ayatollah called on the Afghan ulema and religious centers to remain vigilant and make public informed of the enemy plots.

Ayatollah Emami-Kashani said the killing of Mazari should be considered as an alarm to all world Muslims and against Shia-Sunni unity. He said that today all world Muslims and Afghan people should hate this "corrupt and subservient" group and condemn its acts.

Moreover, Emami-Kashani said the enemies followed a main goal to harm the foundations of Islam, because they have realised the eternal power of Islamic thoughts after the triumph of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. He said the culture of fighting against blashphemy had been revived in the Muslim world in the post- revolutionary era and any arrogant plan aimed at confronting Muslims was doomed to failure.

For the same reason, the ayatollah added, the enemy has concentrated its efforts today on launching cultural inroads.

Elsewhere in his second sermon, Ayatollah Emami-Kashani prayed for the speedy recovery of Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, the son of the late leader of the islamic revoltion.

Pakistan

Security Arrests Six 'Friends' of Ramzi

BK1703061895 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Ismail Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR: A Pakistani security agency has arrested six people, four of them expatriates, for their alleged connection with Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, accused of having masterminded the 1993 New York World Trade Centre bombing.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on orders of the federal interior ministry in an operation arrested three Sudanese, an Iranian and two Pakistanis from Khyber Colony Peshawar on March 11 at 7:30 pm. The accused were shifted to Rawalpindi Adiala Jail the following day where they are being questioned by the federal investigation agencies for their alleged links with Ramzi Yusuf.

A senior police official disclosed to the News that arrested included three Sudanese—Adel At-Tayyab, an employee of the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO), Fazel Omar, a student of the NWFP University of Engineering $ Technology Peshawar and Bahauddin, a lecturer at the IIRO-funded Islamic University for Science & technology, an Iranian Ibrahim Rasul and two Pakistanis, Faziullah Hamidi and Dr Saleem Abdel Rahim, director of an expatriate relief agency in Peshawar. The official said the expatriates have been charged under the 14 Foreigners Act, while the Pakistanis have been detained under the Maintenance of Public Order and we delivered them, " the official said.

A government official said the six arrests were made after investigations revealed that Ramzi used to call them at Peshawar. "Ramzi never disclosed his identify and identified himself as "Ali", a source said. Dr Saleem, a Syrian by nationality who has now become a naturalised Pakistani, lived with the three co-accused Sudanese in rented flats and shared a telephone with them.

The role of the Iranian, a "displace" person holding a UNHCR card, appears to be shady. He told the CID that he was arrested in Saudi Arabia for overstaying and later deported. He said he left Iran and came to Pakistan to fight in the Afghan Jihad but was held captive by Sayyaf's Ettehad-e Eslami for two years, He however, did not tell when all that happened.

He disclosed that he had lied to the UNHCR that his father was killed in Iran and that he had to flee to take refugee in Pakistan. "He does seem rather suspicious, " an official said. The UNHCR office in Peshawar said it had no information on Ibrahim Rasul and that he might have obtained the card from its Islamabad office.

Minister: FBI 'Not Meddling' in Internal Affairs

BK1703111095 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 17 Mar 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bhurban, March 16—Federal Minister for Production and Industries Brig. (Retd) [Brigadier, retired] Mohammad Asghar has said that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is not meddling in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

Talking to newsmen here, he said the FBI team has arrived in Pakistan with the permission of the government adding that it does not amount to interference in the Pakistan's internal matters.

It may be recalled that FBI team is visiting Karachi to investigate into the assassination of two American diplomats.

Answering a question, he said it was not an unwise decision on the part of the government to withdraw army from Sindh. He said army cannot stay in Karachi for good, in view of its original duty of defending country's frontiers.

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He said the sitting government should not be blamed for deteriorating situation in Sindh as it is a long standing problem.

The Federal Minister while answering a question about the strike call given by the traders of Karachi for March 25 as a protest against the government's failure to control the law and order situation he said "they have their own viewpoint but I think the decision will not serve the national interest and would be detrimental to the country's economy".

About the industrial and economic policies of the government he said their policies are yielding positive results.

Murder of U.S. Diplomats Blamed on Consulate

BK1703115595 Islamabad THE NATION in English 17 Mar 95 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Rawalpindi—Federal Interior Minister, Major-General (Retd) Nasirullah Babar, has said that there was no security arrangement for US diplomats who were killed by terrorists in Karachi and added that the American Consulate has also realised this mistake and in case if they did not have security arrangements they should have asked the authorities to provide them security guard who could escort them to their office and back.

The Interior Minister expressed his views while addressing newsmen at the end of a Police Seminar.

Mr Nasirullah Babar recalled that Americans in Pakistan have arranged for the security measures by a private security agency and the tragedy of murder of US diplomats occurred due to the mistake of the Consulate.

APP adds: the Interior Minister, Maj Gen (Retd), Nasirullah Khan Babar said that the Government had decided to confiscate the property of terrorists to mount pressure for (?moving out) crimes.

The Minister said that nobody found involved in terrorism and other heinous crimes irrespective of his social status, would be spared.

The Minister informed the journalists that terrorists and other criminals would be shown on TV so that their ugly faces were known to the people.

Without improving the atmosphere of security the development and uplift of the society and the country was not possible, said the Interior Minister. It is, therefore, imperative than all the organs of criminal justice system, function in close harmony and understanding. Maintenance of the law and order is vital for the promotion of economic growth and social development in a country, he added.

The just enforcement of the criminal law is of prime importance for the establishment of a credible and legitimate criminal justice system. In Pakistan, like any Third World country, the law enforcement needs to be developed in such a way that it is effective and result-oriented.

As discussed at the seminar, the Minister said an integrated and appropriate relationship among the police, courts and prisons is very important and essential to the success of a criminal justice system. Separate workshops on current issues like female victimisation, computerisation and environmental protection have provided a chance for the participants to discuss the real contemporary issues. Similarly narcotic offences have also been the subject matter of discussion besides international cooperation [words indistinct].

The Minister said that we have heard a number of useful recommendations made by this seminar, which will go a long way in helping to develop a viable and efficient law and order machinery and to fight against crime. The government is waiting for a formal submission of the recommendations for active consideration and implementation.

The draft recommendations were presented on a variety of subjects which came under discussion at the seminar. The draft recommendations would be sorted out by a committee to give them a final shape for submission to the government. [passage omitted]

Turkey's Demirel Attends Monument Unveiling

BK1603154895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and President Suleyman Demirel have reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen traditional cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey and stand by each other in pains and joys. They were speaking at unveiling of Demirel monument in Islamabad today dedicated to the friendship of the two countries and in recognition of President Demirel's contribution to Pak-Turkish relations and peace. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto recalled services of Mr. Suleyman Demirel toward RCD [Regional Cooperation and Development] and the Economic Cooperation Organization. She said our people and those who cherish justice and fair play remember Mr. Demirel's role during the dark days of military rule in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Turkish president said the monument is an example of deep-rooted friendship between the two countries. He specially praised Pakistan for continued support for the just cause of the Kashmiri people. President Suleyman Demirel said Pakistan has great potential to move toward modernization.

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Road Construction Agreement Signed With Iran

BK1703103095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 15 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and Iran have signed an agreement for the construction of 300 km road in Pakistan. The Iranian deputy minister for road and transportation, (Ghain Moghami), and secretary of communications signed the agreement in Islamabad today. Under the agreement, Iranian firms who will participate in open bidding will finance up to 50 percent of the cost; 650 km-long Liari-Gwadar-Pasni road, 300 km of sections of Karachi-Quetta highway, and 170 km Dalbandin-Mushkir road are the identified areas.

Gas Pipeline Agreement Signed With Turkmenistan

BK1703110995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan and Turkmenistan signed an agreement in Islamabad yesterday. Under the agreement, Turkmenistan will provide to Pakistan about 2 billion cubic feet of gas daily through a pipeline. The pipeline will connect Turkmenistan with Sui gas plant in Pakistan through Afghanistan. The project will cost about $3 billion. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said that at present only 14 percent of Pakistan's population has the facility of natural gas and her government wants to extend the facility to all people.

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